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THE MIND OF THE SAVAGE

RAOUL ALLIER

THE MIND OF THE SAVAGE

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TRANSLATED BY

FRED ROTHWELL

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Raoul Allier was born at Vauvert (Gard) on June 29th, 1862, and entered the Normal Superior School in 1882. Having graduated in philosophy in 1885, he was appointed in 1886 to be instructor in that subject at the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Montauban. In 1889 he was appointed in the same capacity to the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Paris, then a part of the University. From that time he has been much concerned with the history of French Protestantism. In particular he has taken a very active part in all work directed towards the establishment of liberty of conscience and worship in Madagascar. He was largely responsible for securing the rights of English and Norwegian missions in that island. In a great measure the preparation of the decree of March 11th, 1913, which originated the new mission system in Madagascar, is due to him. Meanwhile, he took part in all the discussions arising from the legislation which aimed at the separation of Church and State. By his articles published weekly in the paper *Le Siècle*, he strove to obtain the inclusion in the law of 1905 of almost all the liberal measures which it now contains. For thirty years he has been a member of the Committee of the Missions Evangéliques of Paris, of which he is now Vice-President. Along with these practical activities he has devoted himself to the psychological and sociological study of uncivilized races. He anticipated his own publications on this subject in 1912 by a sensational preface to the book by the missionary M. Rusillon on the *Tromba* in Madagascar. In 1925 his *Psychology of Conversion amongst the Uncivilized*, the preparation of which had occupied him continuously for more than thirty years, was published. This was followed in 1927 by the work entitled *Le non-civilisé et Nous*, of which this book is a translation. As a continuation of his studies on the same races, he is preparing a new work on the connection between magic and religion. Since 1921 M. Raoul Allier has been Doyen of the Faculty of Protestant Theology at Paris.

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PREFACE

The present work is the second of a series which, along with other studies, has taken up the greater part of my life. The first of these works, *La psychologie de la conversion chez les peuples non-civilisés* (two octavo volumes of 595 and 509 pages, published in Paris by Payot) had already led me to reflect upon the belief in magic and to investigate the psychological origin of this superstition. In the following pages I have not considered it necessary to resume this inquiry, which will be found in the first volume (chapters ix. and x. pages 211 to 276) of the above-mentioned work. In the present book, I deal with some of the disastrous consequences of this belief. I have considered these consequences, more especially in their relation to science. In a subsequent work I shall show how magic, instead of being the origin of religion, is, on the contrary, a parasite that tends to stifle religious feeling.

RAOUL ALLIER

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THE MIND OF THE SAVAGE

CHAPTER I

RISE AND FALL OF THE THEORY OF THE NOBLE SAVAGE

DURING the whole of the eighteenth century down to recent times a proverb was current amongst psychologists to the effect that human nature is everywhere and always the same, and that consequently the difference between uncivilized man and ourselves is only one of culture and development. After repeating an axiom for so long unchallenged, philosophic thought hesitates to regard it as indisputable as had been imagined. Doctrines are widespread which oppose it, and it would seem that this tradition is giving ground before a theory which is almost its exact opposite. The time then seems to have come for stating with some precision a problem which is not one of theory alone but leads to important questions of a practical kind.

I

The importance of this strictly philosophic theory which is so often quoted must not be exaggerated. It is not based on a close and scientific study of what used to be called the "savage." It is in a way a corollory of the semi-Cartesian rationalism by which under a variety of forms, for over a century, thinkers were led whilst they imagined themselves to be free. The problem then would not appear to be difficult, at the outset indeed the solution seems very simple. The allusions to uncivilized man are moreover

indirect in most of the books that we have in mind, only arising out of considerations affecting European societies rather than uncivilized peoples.

Thus it is that Fontenelle, discussing ancient and modern races, takes his stand against the theory which states that "the difference between minds is greater than the difference between faces." Faces, by constantly regarding each other, do not tend to become alike; but minds which, by nature, differ as much as faces, are brought by mutual intercourse to a lesser degree of difference. They react on each other to such purpose that they cease to be at the mercy of climatic influences. By constantly reading Greek books, we would finally become that which a succession of marriages with Greek women would have made us. And then, what is known precisely of the influence of climate? Looking closely, we see that "difference in climate must not be ignored when minds are in other respects on an equal level of development." It is culture that makes men really different. "At most one might suppose that the torrid zone and the two arctic zones are unsuitable to the development of the sciences. As yet they have not spread beyond Egypt and Mauritania on the one hand, and Sweden on the other; perhaps it is not chance that has confined them between Mount Atlas and the Baltic Sea: it may be that these are limits that nature has imposed upon the sciences, and that one can hope in vain to see great authors arise amongst the Lapps or the Negroes."[1]

Be that as it may, nature, according to Fontenelle, is not alone in determining the appearance of talent or genius. She always seems to scatter the seeds of talent and of genius broadcast. But favourable circumstances

[1] *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, edition de 1790, vol. v. pp. 280-283.

are essential for their development, and many things may intervene to bring it to an abrupt conclusion. "Inundations of barbarians, governments either directly opposed or unsympathetic to science and art, prejudices and fancies which may take an infinity of different shapes, such as in China the respect for corpses which precludes the practice of anatomy, universal wars: these are all liable to cause long periods of ignorance and bad taste. Add to this the varying ways of expending private wealth, and you will see how nature scatters the potential Virgils and Ciceros in vain about the world, and how rare it must be that any of them, so to speak, attain to success."

All these arguments of the philosopher are confined to limits which in point of time reach no further than the Greeks and Romans, and in space do not extend beyond the civilized world as then known. Barely can we see on the horizon some fantastic shadows of people called barbarians, though we do not suppose they will remain so for all time. "I incline to depict nature," said Fontenelle, "with scales in her hand, like justice, to show that she weighs out and equalizes almost everything she distributes to mankind: happiness, talent, the advantages and the drawbacks of different conditions, varying intellectual gifts. By virtue of her compensations we may hope that the people of the century to come will regard us with mingled fear and admiration, and so repay us for the small esteem in which we are held in our own. They will endeavour to find in our works, beauties to which we laid no claim. Some indisputable fault—which the author himself would to-day acknowledge—will find defenders of redoubtable courage, and heaven knows how scornfully they will treat, in comparison with ourselves, the 'beaux esprits' of that period who may well be

Americans."[1] The Americans in question, the uncivilized peoples of those days, might well have a future of learned societies.

It is impossible to assert with greater distinctness the fundamental identity of all the various elements of mankind. Fontenelle does it still more clearly, if possible, in his treatise on the *Origine des Fables*, in which he examines what he considers to be common to all peoples in explanations of the world. His enquiry only assumes "that which is common to all men and which takes effect in the arctic zones as well as in the torrid."[2] We must not seek in fable for anything but the story of the aberrations of the human mind. "Filling the head with all the extravagances of the Phoenicians and the Greeks is not a science, but the study of that which impelled them to these extravagances is a science indeed. All men are so much alike that there are no people whose follies should not make us tremble."[3] The uncivilized peoples of to-day are, for Fontenelle, the modern representatives of our most distinguished ancestors, and there is no reason why they in turn should not advance as far as we have done. "At one time the Greeks were as much savages as the Americans. . . . Since the Greeks with all their intelligence—when still a young people—did not think more rationally than did the barbarians of America, who were to all appearance a fairly young people when discovered by the Spaniards, we are justified in believing that the Americans would finally have come to think as rationally as did the Greeks had they been given the opportunity."[4]

These opinions of Fontenelle well represent, but with inevitable shades of difference, the general opinion of the

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 300-301. [2] *Op. cit.* p. 365. [3] *Op. cit.* p. 372. [4] *Op. cit.* p. 366.

whole eighteenth century. Helvetius is the principal theorist of the equality of minds. In his opinion, all men, to whatever race they belong, are equally sensitive machines, differing only in the feelings they experience. Pleasure and pain are the starting point of everything; these it is that arouse and quicken the attention and determine our actions. What will attract our attention depends on education—this word being used in its widest sense—that is to say, everything in our surroundings and in the setting which determines our surroundings, which influences our development by the reactions called forth, and more especially by the habits induced. Education which makes men unequal, might, were it rationally understood, become the great equalizing factor and bring all men to the same level of culture and happiness. Natural gifts are the same in all men, but that which varies is the assembly of conditions in which these gifts are able to function. Besides, there is nothing to prove that happiness is not better distributed in the races which we unjustly despise and about which it cannot be said that "the greatest happiness of a few individuals is ever linked with the wretchedness of the majority." This is a truth which Helvetius happily expresses in the following two lines on "savages":

> Chez eux tout est commun. Chez eux tout est égal.
> Comme ils sont sans palais, ils sont sans hôpital.[1]

Perhaps it is Voltaire who at the outset appears to have asserted most definitely the fundamental identity of mankind. He readily uses the terms: "humain" and "humanité," giving them the widest significance. At one time he uses them to denote the feelings which, to his mind, ought to inspire conduct; at another they

[1] With them everything is held in common, all men are equal.
They have no palaces, but neither have they almshouses.

indicate his faith in the unity of the various races throughout time and space. The fault he finds with the historical religions is that their particular dogmas are valid only for certain well-defined portions of humanity. He says that deism is superior to those religions in that it is universal in its range and is as old as the human species itself. In a word, if Voltaire, in spite of formal evidence to the existence of ceremonial debauchery in the temples of Babylon, refuses to believe it, this is because he cannot possibly acknowledge that customs " opposed to human nature " could ever have been in vogue. But we must not hide from ourselves the fact that the humanity which interests him is civilized humanity. His first claim to esteem consists in the fact that he vastly extended the range of this humanity, that he did not confine it to the shores of the Mediterranean, but brought back to it nations and races whose varying cultures seemed to him of the greatest interest : that he claimed a place for Arabs and Hindus, for the Chinese and yet other races. Does this widening of the horizon extend beyond the peoples included by him of his knowledge in general history ? One can readily believe it judging by certain passages, especially those few lines from the *Essai sur les Mœurs* :[1]

" Do you give the name of savage to boors living in cabins with their women folk and a few animals, continually exposed to the inclemency of the seasons, knowing only the earth that nourishes them and the market where they occasionally go to sell their produce and buy a few coarse garments ; speaking a jargon not understood in the towns, possessing few ideas and consequently little able to express themselves ; subject, without knowing why, to a writer to whom they yearly bring half of

[1] Introduction, vii, Ed. Moland, vol. xi. pp. 18-19.

what they have earned by the sweat of their brow, meeting together, on certain days, in a sort of barn to perform rites of which they understand nothing, listening to a man differently dressed from themselves of whose words they have not the faintest understanding; leaving at times their huts at beat of drum to go and get killed in a foreign land and to kill their fellow beings for a quarter of what they could earn by working at home? There are savages of this kind all over Europe. We must surely admit that the people of China and the Kaffirs whom we have been pleased to call savages, are infinitely superior to our own. The Huron, the Algonquin, the Illinois, the Kaffir, and the Hottentot know how to make everything they need: and this our own boors cannot do. The peoples of America and Africa are free, but our own savages are without even the idea of freedom. . . . They know what honour means—a word which our savages of Europe have never heard. They have a home-land which they love and defend; they make treaties; they fight courageously and often speak with heroic energy. Is there a nobler answer in Plutarch's Lives than that of the Canadian chief, who on being requested by a European nation to yield his patrimony, said: "We were born on this land, our fathers are buried in it. Shall we say to our fathers' bones: 'Rise and come with us to a foreign land?' . . ."

If we reflect a little on the general impression made by this book, we are justified in wondering whether Voltaire really attaches the importance he seems to do to his eulogy of the "savage." His remarks serve but as the pretext for his satirical shafts against civilization. Whilst discussing the savage he is really lecturing the civilized. His ironical antitheses are all-important, the rest is secondary. We must not forget the letter in which he

jestingly tells Rousseau that, in advocating a state of nature, he provokes the desire to walk about on all fours. No need to urge the objection that, in bringing before us an example of natural intelligence, he selected a Huron.[1] This character is not an "American by birth"; he is a man of white race brought up in Huron fashion. Voltaire believed, like all his contemporaries, that fundamentally all men are the same, and of equal worth. But though he seemed to express himself somewhat after the fashion of his contemporaries when discussing the "noble savage," he took good care not to follow them blindly.

Was he alone in his century to have these doubts? We are not sure. It is often stated that Hume was fond of saying that the oaks and poplars of our country-side are not more like those that grew six thousand years ago than we are like the Greeks and Latins; and that, if we would know the working and interplay of the passions in our contemporaries, we need but study Demosthenes and Tacitus. It would seem that we should not go too far in our generalisations from this view. In the passage referred to, Hume does not seem to have looked beyond the civilized humanity of which we form a part. To feel the truth of this, we need only read the following lines: "Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English. You cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former *most* of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human

[1] See the story entitled *L'Ingénu*.

nature." "Nor are the earth, air, and the other elements examined by Aristotle and Hippocrates more like to those which at present lie under our observation than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world." [1]

Hume gave so little thought to uncivilized peoples that he did not hesitate to write as follows: "I am apt to suspect the Negros to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or in speculation. . . . Such a uniform and constant difference (between the negros and the whites) could not happen in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. . . . In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning, but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly." [2]

These reservations on the part of Hume, as well as those we infer in Voltaire, in no way changed the ideas prevalent in the eighteenth century. Buffon, too, is so firmly convinced of the fundamental identity of all men that he formally arrives at the same deductions as all the theorists of the "noble savage." According to him, an observer studying the savage's soul, "would see the soul laid bare, distinguish all its natural impulses, and perhaps recognise therein more of gentleness, peace, and calm than in his own. Perhaps he would clearly see that virtue is the attribute rather of the savage than of the civilised man, and that vice is the natural offspring of social conditions." [3]

[1] Huxley's *Hume*, pp. 185-186. [2] Hume's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 236.

[3] *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1853, vol. iii. pp. 308; *cf.* André Lichtenberger, *Le socialisme au* XVIII^e *siècle*, pp. 360-361.

What is it that has encouraged the formation and diffusion of this psychological thesis ?

II

Here we are confronted with a tradition which goes back at least as far as Montaigne. We should read again his chapter on the Cannibals.[1] It was inspired, in all probability, by what Montaigne learned from Villegagnon's voyage to Brazil. One passage of this chapter is very clear on this point. " For a long time I had with me," he says, " a man who had dwelt ten or twelve years in that other world which was discovered in our century, on the spot where Villegagnon landed, to which he gave the name of Antarctic France. This discovery of a boundless country seems to be of the utmost importance. The man I had was simple and uncouth, the sort of man that makes a truthful witness ; for refined people are more inquisitive and more observant, but inclined to exaggerate, and then to make their tale more plausible and convincing they cannot refrain from slightly perverting the facts. The man must be very trustworthy or so simple that he does not know how to make up a story and give the semblance of truth to a fabric of lies, nor must he be partisan. Such a man was mine. . . ."

From what this witness told him, Montaigne considers " that there is nothing barbarous or savage in this nation, save to the extent that everyone regards as barbarous the things to which he is not accustoned." We are dominated by " the examples and ideas and the customs of the land in which we live." It is there that we always think we see " perfect religion, perfect government, and thorough

[1] *Les Essais*, livre i. ch. xxx.

arrangement." "They are savage or wild," says Montaigne, "just as we call wild the fruits which nature, when left to herself, and following her wonted course produces; whereas in truth, it is those which we have perverted by our arts and withdrawn from their natural state which we ought rather to call wild; in the former, the true and most useful and natural virtues and properties are alive and vigorous. The latter we have debased in adapting them to our own depraved tastes; and yet we find the diverse fruits from these untilled lands well to our taste, even surpassing our own in flavour and delicacy." Montaigne thinks these nations barbarous merely because they have received a veneer of mental culture whilst being but little removed from their original state of simplicity. He recounts their customs as they were described to him; he does not regard them as more barbarous than our own, of which frightful examples are given. He mentions them all without exactly recommending their adoption and smilingly concludes: "All that's not so bad; but what could you expect, they do not wear breeches."[1]

Might not one of the sources upon which Montaigne drew have been the account written by Jean de Léry on this expedition to Brazil?[2]

Indeed, it does not appear sufficient to take into account the stories and descriptions that may have been supplied to Montaigne by one of Villegagnon's companions. This man, says the author of the *Essais*, was "simple and uncouth." He may have furnished his master with material details, but one does not see how he could have inspired Montaigne with certain of his ideas which at times seem akin to those of Jean de Léry. He too speaks of the

[1] *Les Essais*, livre i. ch. xxx.

[2] *Histoire d'un voyage fait en terre du Brésil, autrement dite Amérique.*

cannibalism and the cruelty of the Topinambous, which he saw at close quarters in all their horror. Then he adds: "Nevertheless, in order that those who read of the horrible things practised daily among these barbarous nations of the land of Brazil may pay a little attention to what takes place here among ourselves, I will in the first place say that, if one reflects in good earnest on what our rich usurers do (draining the blood and marrow of so many widows, orphans, and others for whom murder were preferable to a lingering death) we will call them even more cruel than the savages of whom I speak." Then Léry, thinking of the tortures he witnessed in Brazil, tells of regions nearer home, mentioning specially the horrors of "the bloody tragedy which began in Paris on the 24th of August, 1572," which he regards as worse than what takes place in Brazil.[1]

Is it a matter of religion? Assuredly, these savages acknowledge "no gods either celestial or terrestial," but only demons who make them tremble (they, too, have a vague hope of living after death, somewhere "beyond the mountains"). But "there are atheists more atheistic on this side." True, savages have their absurd magicians, but compare, says Léry, intent on confessional polemics, "the wearers of false relics in popedom." The sorcerers of Brazil dispense their silly clap-trap, but compare with them, says our author, "the bell-ringing hypocrites before the shrine of St. Anthony" or those who "mumble their hours." He delights to show us that the Topinam-

[1] *Cf.* Montaigne, *Les Essais*, loc. cit.: "I think there is greater barbarity in eating a man alive than in eating him dead, in rending with hellish torture a quivering sentient body, in roasting it little by little, in having it torn and devoured by dogs and swine (as we have not only read but lately witnessed, not amongst old enemies but neighbours and fellow-citizens, and what is even worse, all this under the pretext of religion and godliness) than in roasting and eating it after it has breathed its last."

bous are just as good as his own religious adversaries, that they, being without the light of faith, are even better.

Is it a matter of polygamy? Well, savages are polygamous, but their wives do not quarrel, as Leah and Rachel did. "Whereupon let anyone consider whether it would be possible for the wives amongst ourselves to live in harmony even if God allowed more wives than one." Note too that savage mothers suckle their own little ones, and never put them out to foster-mothers. Nor does Léry fail to frown upon the over-refined ladies. Moreover, the babes of savages are not foolishly tied up in swaddling clothes, and here he seems to anticipate Rousseau who protested against the "hellish swaddling-bands." Their wives refuse to dress as the Genevans would like. The whip is used to compel them, though even then the desired result is not attained. They preserve their nakedness. Léry almost makes up his mind to accept the situation. He considers that this nakedness does not incite to "lewdness and lechery" so much as do "trinkets, paints, false wigs, curls, large ruffled collars, farthingales, robes upon robes, and endless other trifles with which the women and maidens disfigure themselves at home." And he reaches the conclusion that these savages are happy, that their delightful climate is free from disease, that no one has grey or white hair, or worldly cares of any kind. They have none of those ills "which gnaw the bones and suck the marrow, weaken the body and destroy the mind, in a word, which embitter our days and bring us to an untimely end."

While Montaigne was always widely read, Jean de Léry was not unknown to his contemporaries. His work ran into no fewer than eight—perhaps nine—editions,

the last of which appeared in 1677.[1] He himself made a Latin translation of it, which was printed five times, in 1586, 1592, 1594, 1600, and 1642. It must be from these two sources that we get the tradition of the " noble savage," which was destined to survive till the end of the eighteenth century, or even the beginning of the nineteenth.

Traces of it are to be found in the accounts given by Baron de la Hontan of his expeditions to Canada which, although their authenticity has been disputed, really appear to have taken place. He would seem to have reached the then little known regions of the Far West, and he showed in his work [2] peculiar sympathy with these men " who know nothing of *thine* or *mine*, who have no class distinctions, but live in the state of equality which nature intended." [3] It is the book of Gueudeville, however,[4] which, more than his own work, helped to make the traveller famous and to spread abroad his ideas. The Huron he introduces is an imaginary personage, so much so that he is supposed to have visited Europe, of which he speaks with knowledge. The portrait he gives us of the Red-Skins is purely fanciful. His main object is to extol a state of society based apparently on the model of Thomas More's *Utopia*, of which Gueudeville himself

[1] Here we only mention those that may have paved the way for the " noble savage " theory. In 1880 M. Paul Gafferel published a reprint of this work. The question of the influence of Jean de Léry's work upon Montaigne and upon his chapter " The Cannibals," has recently been taken up by M. Charly Clerc and treated by him with decisive ingenuity in the *Revue de l'Institut de Sociologie* (*Fondation Solvay, Université libre de Bruxelles*), 7th year, 1927, No. 2, April-June, under the title : *Le voyage de Jean de Léry et la découverte du 'bon sauvage.'*

[2] *Nouveau voyage dans l'Amérique septentrionale, comprenant plusieurs relations de différents peuples qui l'habitent*, etc. 1703. 2nd volume.

[3] *Op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 146.

[4] *Dialogues ou entretiens entre un savage et le baron de la Hontan*, 1704.

made a translation (1715). None the less did he aid in promulgating an idea which became very popular, despite its falsity.

This theory of the "noble savage" was destined to meet with extraordinary favour. Men who were not bad observers, and who lived amongst uncivilized tribes, are largely responsible for this psychological error. Living in the midst of their flocks the Jesuits become fond of those to whom they preach the gospel, and whilst not under-estimating their vices, are struck by their good qualities. These natives show such simplicity of soul that the missionaries come to wonder whether they are not nearer salvation than civilized man, whether a state of society is not more dangerous than one of nature. Their illusion is due to a very special mental condition, one that André Lichtenberger has eloquently explained in the following words: "Imbued with ardent faith which causes them to look upon martyrdom as the one supreme honour, and those who inflict it as their benefactors, scorning the worldly depravity of which they have heard rumours, they indulge in idyllic representations of their neophytes, and attribute largely to the Indians and to nature, as well as to their own efforts and equally to divine grace, all merit for such goodness as they possess. In contact with these simple beings, they remember the communities of the early Christian Church and conceive the idea of reviving them. Brought up to admire classic antiquity, they are struck by the analogies to those of the ancient Greeks which the customs of the savages afford; they assume a common origin and praise in them those virtues which their masters had taught them to admire in the Sparta of Lycurgus."[1] And this is why the collec-

[1] *Le socialisme au* XVIII^e *siècle*, p. 58.

tion of the *Lettres édifiantes*, which (because our attention has been aroused upon certain characteristics of the uncivilized peoples) we now regard as ethnographical documents of the first importance, was interpreted quite differently by all readers of the eighteenth century, and assisted in spreading abroad, not only the idea of the "noble savage" in its crude form, but also the belief in a fundamental identity of all human beings, who are divided only by the goodness of nature and the depravity of civilization. This dual conviction forced itself on all the thinkers of the century, and became so strong that it formed a kind of prism through which the travellers saw realities distorted. An explorer like Bougainville, amazed at not finding in Paraguay the blissful state that he expected, seems at times inclined to distrust the testimony of his own eyes rather than that of his reason which showed him "a model administration designed to give men both happiness and wisdom." When confronted with the islanders of Tierra del Fuego, the most wretched creatures he has ever seen, his faith in the goodness of a state of nature is unaffected by the spectacle, for one cannot bewail, he says, "the lot of a man who is free and master of himself, without duties or business of any kind, content with what he has because he knows nothing better." At Tahiti he at first saw nothing of the cruelty of the people, and the land appeared to him a sort of idyllic Eden, inhabited by men who were healthy, strong, and gentle.[1]

How can we fail to recognize, in these somewhat fanciful representations of what was taken for a real state, the origin of Rousseau's theory on the state of nature? It is for us to discover whether the philosopher of Geneva

[1] *Voyage autour du Monde par la frégate du roi "Boudeuse" et la flûte "Etoile,"* 2e edition, Paris, 1772, vol. i. pp. 182, 294; vol. ii. pp. 43, 80.

considered the conclusions of these observers, ever ready to admire uncivilized peoples more or less recently discovered, a sufficient basis for this theory without further critical examination. Was it not for him, originally at least, a simple logical postulate serving to explain man as he existed, just as the "contrat social," though not an historical fact, serves to explain our societies? Certain declarations of Rousseau seem to suggest this latter interpretation. The state of nature is, he says in his *Discours sur l'inégalité*, "a state that no longer exists, that perhaps has never existed at all, and probably never will; about which, all the same, it is necessary to entertain right ideas, if we are truly to estimate our present state." "We must not," he says a little further on, "look upon the investigations on this subject as historical truths; but only as hypothetical and conditional arguments, calculated rather to throw light upon the nature of things than to reveal their real origin."[1]

Intelligent men suspect that these statements of Rousseau are mere precautions of style, prompted by the desire to avoid a conflict with the theologians, especially those of Geneva. It was simply a dialectical artifice which must not prevent us from distinguishing what lies behind it, to wit, belief in the reality of the state of nature in the past. Whatever side be taken in this dispute, it remains true that, though Rousseau does not put forth the "noble savage" as the prototype of man in his natural state, he considers human nature to be essentially one at all times and in all places. On this point, he faithfully interprets the idea generally held in his day.

August Comte, also, found no difficulty whatsoever in repeating the commonplace aphorism about general

[1] *Œuvres de Rousseau*, vol. i. pp. 532-533.

identity of character. He does not question the postulate, that the fundamental constitution of man is invariable and progress can neither develop it indefinitely nor change it. "*Evolution*, but not *transformation*," says Lévy-Bruhl. "This great principle, handed over by biology to sociology, dominates the whole of this latter science. Throughout the long story that leads mankind out of savage animality into positive civilization, nothing absolutely new can be discovered. Everything that gradually reveals itself existed beforehand in the nature of man, potentially, it is true, and this state would perhaps never have ceased had there not taken place a combination of favourable conditions."[1] At all stages of historical evolution the various faculties, physical, moral, and intellectual, are encountered exactly the same and always similarly co-ordinated. The preponderance of the egotistic over the altruistic instincts is deep-rooted in our nature, and, though progress favours the "development of the altruistic feelings," it cannot all the same overthrow the natural balance of our inclinations.

III

The postulate on which philosophy had lived so long met with vigorous opposition in the nineteenth century. Taine never tired of combating it. Last century, he said, "they thought that men of every race and century were all but identical, the Greek, the barbarian, the Hindu, the man of the Renaissance, and the man of the eighteenth century, cast, as it were, in the same mould, and that in accordance with an abstract conception, which served for the whole human race. They knew man, but not men;

[1] *La philosophie d'Auguste Comte*, p. 248. Cf. *Cours de philosophie positive*, v. p. 81.

they had not penetrated to the soul; they had not seen the infinite diversity and marvellous complexity of souls."[1]

Renan made a like criticism. "Psychology," he wrote, "starts with the hypothesis of a perfectly homogeneous mankind, that must always have been such as we see it. This hypothesis is partly true; for there really are common attributes of the human mind that constitute its unity, but it also contains a serious error, or rather, it overlooks a fundamental truth revealed by history, namely, that mankind is not a simple body and cannot be treated as such. The man endowed with the ten or a dozen faculties recognised by psychology is a pure fiction. In reality, one is more or less man, more or less a son of God. One possesses of God and of Truth what one can hold and what one deserves. I see no reason why a Papuan should be immortal. Instead of regarding human nature, like Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart, as a revelation dashed off at a single stroke as an inspired and perfect Bible from the very first day, we have come to see in it corrections and successive additions. . . ."[2]

Renan, moreover, contented himself with these quite general developments of a psychology from which uncivilized peoples were deliberately excluded. Did he not write, with special reference to the South Sea natives whose atrocious cannibalism was everywhere being described at the time, the stupendous sentence: "O, let these last sons of nature die out in their mother's lap, do not interrupt with your austere dogmas the fruit of twenty centuries of reflection, their childish games, their moonlight dances, their sweet though ephemeral raptures."[3] To picture the life of the uncivilized man as a joyous

[1] *Histoire de la Littérature anglaise*, Introduction, pp. 11-12.

[2] *Fragments philosophiques*, p. 265. Cf. *Avenir de la Science*, pp. 181, 182.

[3] *Questions contemporaines*, p. 35.

idyll, cadenced by the jerky beating of the tom-tom and the frenzied gesticulations of the bamboula, is to confess that we have not taken the trouble to examine into his terror-stricken soul.

Notwithstanding all the protests in opposition to the old postulate of the eighteenth century, the great anthropologist school of England, represented by Lubbock, Tylor, Frazer, Hartland, and Andrew Lang, accepted it without demur. They all even took it as the starting point for their own research work. They applied the comparative method in constructing the scientific monuments we owe to them, monuments that are inexhaustible mines for investigators in search of documents on the institutions and customs, languages and beliefs of the uncivilized. But they have always added to this method a hypothesis tending to explain the facts encountered, by the general structure of the human mind. This identity of the "human mind," a perfect unity, everywhere and always the same from the logical standpoint, was never discussed or proved by them; they never even made a formal enunciation of it, so unassailable did they regard it. They were content to take it for granted, looking upon it as indisputable. The consequence is clearly that set forth by Lévy-Bruhl in the following words: "The collective mental images of the primitive races which we consider so strange, the no less extraordinary relationships which we find between them, raise no problems whose solution would enrich or modify our conceptions of the human mind. We know beforehand that this mind is alike in them and in us. All that remains to be discovered is how mental functions identical with our own could have produced these ideas and these relationships." [1]

[1] *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, p. 7.

Are we to wonder that the missionary who leaves his country to win souls for Christ is dominated by a belief, the preconceived belief in the unity of the human race? He is well aware that he will have to deal with extremely backward individuals who know nothing of our culture and whose customs may at times border upon bestiality. But even when he is inclined to accept the most depressing descriptions of the intellectual and moral state of those among whom he has settled, the idea does not enter his head that he is going to live amongst human beings of a kind differing from that to which he himself belongs. He is convinced that, between the mentality of the persons amongst whom his lot is to be cast and that of his fellow-countrymen there is no difference of kind but simply one of degree of development. Must we make it a subject of grievance against him if he entertains a conviction held by innumerable philosophers and ethnologists before him which, through many maybe depressing disappointments, is sustained in him by a fervent idealism, by the duty of struggling against painful differences, and by a firm determination to being back into the circle of the human family the backward children who seem to have left it.

IV

Against the traditional postulate of the fundamental identity of the human mind, Lévy-Bruhl, with striking wealth of detail, advanced the thesis of the radical difference of the civilized and uncivilized mentalities. This thesis he enunciated in its most precise form. The savants of the English anthropological school, when describing the customs, the beliefs, and institutions that flourish in primitive societies, take for granted that, if we

were in the place of these primitive people, our mind being as it now is, we should think and act as they do. Lévy-Bruhl starts from precisely the contrary hypothesis. "I admit," he says, "that, considering their way of thinking and acting, the institutions on which their social order rests, such as we observe them, it is impossible that their mental outlook should be the same as ours, and that the extent and limits of their experience should coincide entirely with our own: consequently, we ought to make very earnest efforts to enter into their way of thinking and feeling. It may be that we shall never succeed in doing this completely. Such is the opinion of some of the most acute observers, of Mr. Elsdon Best, for instance, who has made such a thorough and prolonged study of the beliefs and institutions of the Maoris of New Zealand."[1]

How are we to interpret M. Lévy-Bruhl's theory? Is it simply a working hypothesis? Is it a dogmatic thesis? After reading the author's two works, published in 1910 and 1922, on the uncivilized peoples, this latter interpretation seems inevitable. The former of these books insists principally on a law of participation therein regarded in its relations with the principle of identity; it tends to prove that the mind of uncivilized man is but slightly sensitive to contradiction. The second book explains how such a mind regards cause and effect. Both books attempt to demonstrate that this mentality is essentially "mystical and instinctive," and that it is dominated by "collective mental images of social origin, which confuse our thoughts and render difficult and almost always uncertain our understanding of their institutions." Here we have a whole host of ideas that

[1] *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*, avril, 1923 (séance du 15 fevrier), p. 23.

appear to lead to a very positive conclusion—a conclusion which is perhaps not devoid of practical consequences, and which some people attempt to utilize in the present-day conflicts between feelings and ideas in the so-called higher societies.

On the other hand, there are times when all this seems no more than a working hypothesis. According to M. Lévy-Bruhl, the English anthropological school is led by its initial postulate to investigate and to bring to light the fundamental resemblances that exist beneath a superficial difference between primitive mentality and our own. It multiplies similarities and exposes unsuspected survivals. But, after all, it tells us nothing new. To M. Lévy-Bruhl the contrary hypothesis seemed a more fruitful one. " It led me," he says, " rather to seek for the differences between primitive mentality and our own, to analyse them in detail, to establish their status, to study them in their relations with customs and institutions ; it opened up a way which, at all events, did not terminate beforehand in something already known. This is why, quite apart from the other reasons which influenced me, I had to choose it as a working hypothesis. It promised a better result—a promise which, in my opinion, has been justified. I think I have succeeded in disentangling the essential characteristics—mystical and prelogical—of primitive mentality. These have enabled me to account for a number of facts of which none but arbitrary or merely probable explanations had hitherto been given. I hasten to add that we are still only dealing here in our analysis of these institutions which we should be wrong for the most part in regarding as simpler than our own, with a general introduction to the study of primitive mentality, with a clue in an extraordinarily complex maze. Know-

ing the trend and direction of this mentality, its habits and principles, we shall be able all the better to follow its progress apparently so disconcerting, and state the problems in terms that do not render their solution impossible.

This attitude, which could no longer be objected to as the outcome of a rigidly dogmatic mind, seems to have become more pronounced in proportion as objections increased to a theory often considered too arbitrary. It was found, for instance, that the way in which the mentality of the uncivilized races is set before us cannot be reconciled with the technical progress that had been made throughout the ages. This progress in technique implies a mental functioning and an intellectual behaviour which emanate neither from the social structure, nor from institutions, nor from the atmosphere created by collective mental images. "This behaviour," says M. Louis Weber, "implies in turn a more or less confused notion of mechanical causality which is the seed of geometrical comprehension and of logical reasoning. Here is the wheel, for instance, whose properties and mechanical use are clearly connected with a primary subconscious geometry. Whatever be the structure of the social group in which the wheel is employed as a means and instrument of rotation the use made of it is always the same. . . . The manufacture and mechanical use of the wheel everywhere underlie one and the same geometrical comprehension, the same system of visual plans, movements, processes, and results; in short, the same mental functioning which owes nothing to the social feelings and the beliefs which the group instils into each of its members. Were it otherwise, neither the manufacture nor the employment of the wheel would have developed everywhere along the lines of a gradually perfected mechanical

adaptation and geometrical regularity." These observations of M. Weber are so important that M. Lévy-Bruhl, while maintaining his opinion, does not hesitate to modify it in the following words: "In proportion as we learn how they (technical methods) developed in the various societies, we shall doubtless have to correct our ideas on primitive mentality. Just because, however, these investigations into technique are far still from having given all that may be expected of them, I consider it prudent not to anticipate what their results may be."[1]

There is no ground for believing that M. Lévy-Bruhl is on the point of abandoning the main element of his theory. Still, it would be unfair to disregard an important aspect of his thought and to exaggerate the doctrinal bearing of a thesis which is instructive to the extent that it eludes *l'esprit de système*.[2]

Now, the remarkable thing is that those who are in most close contact with the uncivilized peoples, *i.e.* the missionaries who have left home with a preconceived belief—we must repeat—in the unity of the human race, are seldom slow to be attacked by doubts directly concerned with the identity of the different fractions of mankind. If the missionary, without further investigation, continues to believe that human nature is everywhere exactly the same, he is liable to make mistake after mistake; he risks arriving at no true result, or, at least we may wonder—and he will be the first to do so—whether the results he thinks he has obtained are anything

[1] *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie*, loc. cit. pp. 37-38.

[2] This aspect seems particularly noticeable in M. Lévy-Bruhl's latest work, *L'Ame Primitive*, whose too concise title might well lead one astray and which has for its object, not a new essay on the psychology of the primitive soul, but a study of the way in which "primitive men" picture their individuality to themselves.

but mere deceptions. Now, when the doubts alluded to assail him, discouragement also threatens to master him; if it is not discouragement, it is uneasiness, or at all events, a feeling of exasperation. It appears difficult for us not to dwell upon such testimony, not to listen to these complaints and not to take them into account, if only for the sake of enunciating the problem before us.[1]

"Our European friends," writes a member of the Rhenish Mission to the Hottentots, "would surely regard as incredible the examples we could give of the dull mentality of these people when called upon to think, to understand or to remember. Though I have known them so long, I cannot help wondering when I see how enormously difficult they find it to grasp the simplest truth and, more especially, to reason for themselves, how speedily they forget what they seem to have understood."[2]

"The African, Negro, or Bantu," writes W. H. Bentley, "does not think, reflect, or reason if he can help it. He has a wonderful memory, has great powers of observation and imitation, much freedom in speech, and very many good qualities; he can be kind, generous, affectionate, unselfish, devoted, truthful, brave, patient, and persevering; but the reasoning and inventive faculties remain dormant. He readily grasps the present circumstances, adapts himself to them and provides for them; but a carefully thought-out plan or a clever piece of induction is beyond him."[3]

Hermann Dieterlen, a singularly shrewd observer, who became most intimate with the South Africans and knew how to speak to them, conversed with some Basutos on

[1] Cf. *Psychologie de la Conversion*, vol. i. pp. 88-91.

[2] *Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft*, 1865, p. 363.

[3] *Pioneering on the Congo*, vol. i. p. 256.

certain of their beliefs. He was struck by the incoherency of what was told him. On remarking to his interlocutors that what they said was altogether contradictory, he received the simple answer: "We do not know; besides, formerly Basutos did not go so closely into things." And he at once writes the following commentary on the reply just been given him: "We must emphasise this statement, 'They did not go so closely into things.' It comes as a revelation to us, like a ray of light upon the way in which the heathen think. We Europeans who reflect and reason, experience an irresistible need to understand everything, to be logical, to reduce everything to a system, to remove all contradiction from our ideas and our beliefs. And we act in the same way when we attempt to understand and explain the religious—or so-called religious—ideas of the negros. What wonder that we fail! The negro is content with vaguer ideas, nor does he allow himself to be troubled by the flagrant contradictions which they contain. He is not precise, does not reason, knows nothing of logic, does not go so closely into things. This is useful information for anyone interested in their religious and moral ideas and in their superstitions. . . . For the rest, these negros have no theories: they have not even convictions, only habits and traditions. What matters it to them if a thing is absurd or ridiculous? They do it, not from conviction, but instinctively and blindly, without reflecting or reasoning, because one acts thus when one is *Mosuto*. And our discussions are powerless to convince them, because our appeal is to a reason which is no more than rudimentary and which they themselves only use blunderingly and intermittently."[1]

[1] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1899, vol. ii. pp. 175-176.

It would be easy to quote numerous passages which can all be summed up as follows : The chief characteristic of the uncivilized man is his amazing incapacity for attention, and more especially his disconcerting inability for logical reasoning. Not that this inability is complete. M. Lévy-Bruhl, who carries to extremes the theory of a great gulf between the uncivilized peoples and ourselves, is the first to acknowledge that the inability he denounces is not absolute. " In practice," he justly remarks, " they have, in order to live, to pursue ends which we have no difficulty in understanding, and we find that to attain them they act somewhat as we should do in their place. . . . Scarcely any state of society is so low but that there has been found in it some invention or manufacture, some industrial or artistic process worthy of admiration." [1] Missionaries, too, who supply us with abundant evidence upon the frequently startling illogicality of the uncivilized peoples, vie with one another in repeating that the very individuals who so often fill them with profound stupefaction, with uneasiness born of affection, also amaze them by their wonderful common sense in the everyday things of life. Without going so far as to deny the existence of mental functions, devoid of which they would no longer be men, it must be stated as a fact that they are but little given to reflection or abstract reasoning, in a word, to intellectual effort. Thus presented, they constitute a living enigma, one to which it is our duty to find the key.

[1] *La Mentalité primitive*, p. 516 et suiv., 92 et suiv.

CHAPTER II

MAGIC AND THE ARREST OF THE INTELLIGENCE

WHAT is there behind the apparently disconnected, or at least mysterious facts? What is it that actuates men whom we so often find incomprehensible?

After much searching, we have reached the conclusion that it is belief in magic which is the basis of this mentality, which moulds it and dominates it. Uncivilized man is ever thinking of occult powers surrounding him, which do his will or serve his needs, which threaten him or which others use to his detriment. There are no doubt other beliefs that influence him, driving him to certain actions or causing him to refrain from others. His way of picturing to himself death and the after-life, his attitude towards the departed and the relations he thinks he has with them, his conception of divine beings and of the obligations he thinks he owes to them, his idea of wrong-doing and of the way in which he should make amends: all these notions are alive in him, and to a great extent inspire his conduct from day to day in details by no means unimportant.[1] But there is not one of these notions which is not influenced by the belief in magic underlying every thought that passes through the mind of uncivilized man. It is this belief which, of itself or in

[1] On all these points, precise and detailed information will be found in our *Psychologie de la Conversion chez les peuples non-civilisés*, Paris, 1925, especially in vol. i., first part, ch. ix, xi, xiv; vol. ii., third part, ch. viii, ix, x *et passim*.

conjunction with all his other beliefs, most frequently determines his conduct and gives his whole existence such a baffling aspect.

I

We assert that the mental picture he forms of things is essentially inspired by magic. In other words, every phenomenon contains for him what is seen and what is not seen. By what is seen we do not mean simply what the eyes distinguish; but rather what strikes the senses generally, what the senses register. But what they perceive is not the essential thing for the people we are studying. That which interests them especially is what is not seen, a combination of invisible and intangible relationships never revealed but everywhere suspected; it is their association with a supernatural power. Does not this supernatural power, whatever be its various manifestations, proceed from the same general idea, that to which the so-called "sociological" school has given a precise and definite name? "To this notion," says Marcel Mauss, "we have given the name of *mana*, borrowed from the Malayo-Polynesian tongues, but used in connection with Melanesian magic wherein Codrington discovered its existence (*The Melanesians*, 1890). It embodies the notion of a power, a cause, a force, a quality, a substance, and a medium. The word *mana* is both substantive, adjective, and verb; it denotes qualities, actions, natures, things. It applies to rites, to actors, to material objects, to the spirits of magic as well as to those of religion." Hubert and Mauss find this soul of magic under various names among most peoples. They even go so far as to say: "The number of societies in which

it cannot be distinctly recognised is becoming smaller and smaller." [1]

Is it really one and the same idea that is met with under the different terms enumerated? We are perhaps justified in doubting it. Hitherto only a single kind of *mana* has been minutely studied, that which Codrington found and analyzed in the Melanesians. It was soon thought that its characteristic features could be recognized in many other peoples. We are sometimes inclined to fear that we may have been led by somewhat hasty generalizations to overlook differences which, as well as points of resemblance, might well require specially careful examination. And yet, provided we give all the words used a somewhat wide and even slightly elastic meaning, we shall have no difficulty in agreeing that *mana*, along with the various words in so many tongues, given as synonyms of this Melanesian term, really denotes magical power, *i.e.* an abstract force, but one which can at the same time have substance and position, acting from a distance and yet without direct connection, unless it be by previous contact, able to move and moving without movement, impersonal and assuming personal forms, divisible and continuous. "*Mana*," and in this we agree with Hubert and Mauss, "is the very essence of force, the motive

[1] Hubert and Mauss, *Mélanges d'histoire des religions*, p. xx. "In Africa," add the authors, "the Bantus, *i.e.* the most important and most numerous of all African tribes, possess the wholly identical notion of *Nkissie*, of *Moquissie*, as the old writers called it. The Ewhés, *i.e.* a large portion of the Nigritians, believe in *Dzo*. This fact forces us to the conclusion that, for the whole of Africa, it is necessary to substitute for the notion of fetish that of *mana*. In America we have already called attention to the Iroquois *orenda*, the Algonquin *manitu*, the Sioux *wakan*, the Pueblo *xube*, and the *naual* of Central Mexico. Add to these the *nauala* of the Kwakiutl. Our hypothesis on the connection between the notion of *brahman* in Vedic India and that of *mana* has recently been accepted by M. Strauss. The number of languages in which the same notion is split up into several expressions is not known." (*Op. cit. p.* xx, xxi.) Cf. Lévy-Bruhl, *L'Ame primitive*, Introduction).

power of all things, strengthening their mechanical action without destroying it. . . . This superaddition is the invisible, the marvellous, the spiritual; in a word, the spirit in which abides all efficacy and all life. . . . Codrington thought that he could call it the supernatural; but in another place he says more correctly that it is the supernatural 'in a way'; the fact is that it is alike natural and supernatural, since it is spread throughout the whole sensible world to which it is alien but in which it resides." [1]

An example will serve as an illustration. An arrow is a sure cause of death. But why has it this virtue? Here we have a clear revelation of the mind of uncivilized man in what may seem to us an absurdity, but which we must be careful not to misinterpret on this account. Of course, the man who puts poison on his arrow is not acting by chance. He is availing himself of the experience of others, for he inherits from his predecessors the exact knowledge of substances the effects of which have been observed and proved. So we find that the African pygmies have at their disposal a great variety of poisons with the various properties of which they are fully acquainted.[2]

The Andamans also have a large collection of poisons, but what is perhaps even more remarkable is the use to which they put them and the ingenuity therein revealed.[3] The same might be said of a host of other tribes.

[1] *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la Magie* (*Année sociologique*, vol. vii. pp. 111-112).

[2] J. J. Harrison, *Life Among the Pygmies*, p. 20.

[3] W. Schmidt, *Die Stellung der Pygmäenvölker*, p. 103. M. Louis R. Lapicque examined the arrows of Negritos in the East Indies, akin to the Andamans. They consist of a sharply pointed splinter of bamboo, at its widest hardly as thick as a match, 2 centimetres long. At one end there is a conical stock of

All this presupposes very careful observation and an understanding of the relation between means and ends. It is quite clear: we are being shown natives who appear to reason after the fashion of the white man. This, however, is only one aspect of the real situation. Here is the other: "What is sought," says M. Lévy-Bruhl, quoting R. H. Codrington (*The Melanesians*, pp. 308-310), "and as they firmly believe, obtained, is an arrow which shall have supernatural power, *mana*, to hurt, in the material of which it is made, and in the qualities added by charms and magical preparations. . . . The point is of a dead man's bone, and has therefore *mana*, it has been tied in with powerful charms and has been smeared with stuff hot and burning, as the wound is meant to be, prepared and applied with charms; that is what they mean by what we, not they, call poisoned arrows. And when the wound has been given, its fatal effect is to be aided and carried on by the same magic that gave supernatural power to the weapon.

"The treatment of the wounded man proceeds on the same principle. If the arrow, or a part of it, has been retained, or extracted with leaf poultices, it is kept in a damp place or in cool leaves; then the inflammation will be slight, and will quickly subside. The man who has inflicted the wound, and his friends, will drink hot and burning juices, and chew irritating leaves; pungent and

agave pith, of a calibre corresponding to that of a blowgun; the other end is pointed and is covered, over a surface of from 15 to 20 millimetres, with a brown substance like resin; this is the poison, the upas. "Just above the smeared part," continues M. Lapicque, "is an ingenious notch. The arrow pierces without being broken. But when the animal, feeling the prick, tries to pull it out, the point breaks away and remains with the poison. At the end of a minute or two, the animal falls dead. Since returning to France, I have tested on various animals some of these arrows. A rabbit dropped after five minutes. Within the same interval, a couple of arrows killed a goat weighing about 45 kilos." (*Les Sakaies de L'Indonésie, Tour du monde*, 1896, 1er *semestre*, p. 50).

bitter herbs will be burnt to make an irritating smoke . . . the bow will be kept near the fire to make the wound it has inflicted burning hot." M. Lévy-Bruhl is justified in adding: "All this takes place in the realm of the mysterious, the friends and foes alike of the wounded come within its influence. What we call a physical effect, the Melanesians regard as magical. We say that, if the arrow is poisoned, it is because the point is smeared with toxic products; the natives say that it is simply charged with *mana* whose power is such that it continues to act from afar upon the wounded."[1]

The natives regard these spells—which sometimes kill and sometimes do not—as both incantations and poisons. Magical devices are supposed to confer their efficacy on other devices, but these others are by no means neglected. On this matter Th. Burnier quotes the annihilation of the Helmore and Price expedition at Lynianti. An old native of the Zambezi informed me that grease had been rubbed on the shaft of their waggon whilst they were asleep: the charm had taken effect and most of the members of the expedition died in consequence. We may be sure that the use of a more expeditious substance was not neglected, though entire confidence was placed in the magical act.[2]

Beliefs of this kind are almost universal. So firmly rooted are they that though the weapon be changed, and the arrow be replaced by the gun, recourse will be had to the same magic. The Makololos request Livingstone to give them "gun-medicine," the philtre without which no one can shoot straight.[3]

[1] *La Mentalité primitive*, p. 385.

[2] *Personal Correspondence*, 22nd January, 1927.

[3] D. Livingstone, *Missionary travels and researches in South Africa*, *p.* 257. It is a general belief that, if the bullet misses its mark, the cause is not due to the

This is a very common type of case. The way in which the natives use really toxic substances proves that in one sense they see and reason about things as we do, and this is very important. On the other hand, they consider everything from the mystical point of view, trusting as much to magical rites as to the various juices with whose effects—especially the harmful ones—they are well acquainted. This confidence in the magical certainly prevents them from paying attention to what is rational in the methods which tradition has handed down to them. When poison is regarded from this point of view there is no longer any motive for uncivilized man to improve his murderous weapon in the light of fresh observations. Without suspecting it, he profits by the experience of others, though he does not know what has led them to their discovery. Obediently and with a sort of religious scrupulousness he practises what he has been taught, and will take good care not to depart from his lore for fear of diminishing its effect.

Hubert and Mauss make an observation[1] the importance of which must not be exaggerated, for it seems to apply to an exceptional case involving a question. According to the reports of European doctors, the so-called poisoned arrows of Melanesia are simply enchanted arrows, *mana* arrows. For all that, they are looked upon as poisoned. It is to their *mana*, *i.e.* to an occult property, not to their tips soaked in poisonous juices, that their efficacy is attributed. The imagined consequences of this

hunter's lack of skill but to a hostile spirit bent upon annoying him. "One day," Th. Burnier relates, "I met a native of the Zambezi returning empty-handed from the hunt, and, on my remarking that he had not brought back any game, he answered that a spirit had turned the bullet aside" (*Personal Correspondence*, 22nd January, 1927).

[1] *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la Magie*, p. 111.

recourse to an indefinable superaddition, an invisible and supernatural power, render deadly the wound inflicted by his weapon. His faith in what he regards as concealed in his arrow, though it is not there, restrains him from going in search of that which would assuredly render deadly the wound inflicted by his weapon. With Goldenweisser, we may ask whether the Bushmen and the Pygmies would not have succumbed to their fierce and numerous enemies, if they had been forced to rely solely on the *mana* of their arrows or their javelins. Well it is for them that they improved their weapons before trusting to an illusory power. We may ask too whether this intervention of magical beliefs did not destroy the advantages of discoveries gained by methods of rational empiricism.

II

In whatsoever domain we encounter magic, the same relations manifest themselves between it and what it is supposed to promote. It is the mysterious virtue which causes the net to catch the fish, the house to remain standing and not crumble to earth at the first gust of wind, the canoe to breast the waves, the grain sown in the field to produce the harvest. No less true is it that the net, if it is to capture its prey, must have been made in a certain way, that the house must have been built of well-chosen material and in accordance with rules proved by experience, that, to be sea-worthy, the canoe has not been constructed in haphazard fashion, and that the grain has not been sown in the field anyhow and anywhen. Trials and observations have led to actions which have afterwards been hallowed, so to speak, by a belief suggested by their favourable results. No suppositious magic, however, can replace the technique on which it may be grafted. It furthers the dis-

covery of no real value in anything ; rather does it prevent the improvement of what has been discovered, either by intellectual effort or by a happy chance. It strengthens confidence in what has been achieved by rational methods, but in obliterating the memory of those methods, it misrepresents the results and prevents their improvement.[1]

A glance at the medical practice of uncivilized peoples confirms this impression. The remedies they use are not all so unreasonable as one might suppose. Just as among ourselves, we have centuries of experience in what we call "old wives' remedies," so do the natives make use of simples which it would be to the interest of our doctors to study closely, for in certain maladies they are not without efficacy. What often prevents us from distinguishing this element of observed experience as regards the medical art among the uncivilized, is that "the medicine man," as Herman Dieterlen explains, "works mainly in secret and jealously keeps his methods to himself. To prepare his remedies, he shuts himself up in a special hut and removes

[1] Daniel Essertier, in his remarkable thesis on *Les Formes inférieures de l'Explication* (Paris, 1926), explains precisely why magic, assuming a cloak of physical science by means of a few investigations and experiments, did not proceed very far in this direction. At bottom, magic is a dream destined to act as counterpoise to a state of unrest, a waking dream, obedient to rules, fantastic indeed, but so methodical as at times to appear scientific. But it is easy to see in what respect magic differs from practical technique. "The ends pursued by magic, in all lands and at all times, are of a practical order : making rain to fall, causing at a distance the death of an enemy, curing illnesses, unearthing hidden treasure. But whereas practical technique complies obediently with the injunctions of nature, travels along the paths traced out by experience, takes into account resistance, mass, and quantity, magic passes them by : things as such do not interest it. To sum up, technique implicitly includes science but never succeeds in originating it, so strictly does it adhere to observed experience. From this experience magic deliberately frees itself, but the arbitrary connections which it establishes between phenomena can never supply a really positive knowledge of them. In a word, the one is in the right, but is not free ; the other is free, but always in the wrong" (pp. 144-145). We are not so sure as M. Essertier that science did not finally emerge from technique. Magic, however, has not only paralyzed technique ; if it had proved greatly superior, it would have prevented science from coming to birth.

all his clothes. To express this kind of retreat, the same word is used as when a hen 'broods.' It is picturesque and characteristic. When my wife was studying botany and questioned the 'medicine-men' who are specialists in such things, she had at first a great deal of trouble in obtaining information from them, because they thought she wished to compete with them. Only by degrees did she gain their confidence and obtain the explanations she wanted. The medicine-man, moreover, keeps his secrets to himself, in order that others, whether rivals or foes, may not learn how to neutralize them. Assuredly the black medicine-men are acquainted with plants that possess real medicinal virtues: leaves, bark, and above all, roots. I guarantee the authenticity of the following curious proof, although I was not the hero of the adventure. A white woman belonging to our Mission was suffering from illness caused by the tape-worm. She was given a remedy prepared by a Christian of Morija, named Amos. The remedy worked, though not completely, the entire taenia issuing except the head, so that the parasite grew afresh. The remedy, therefore, was not altogether infallible, though just as much so as the European remedies that were subsequently employed, cusso and male fern, which did not succeed in removing the head. What was needed to cure the patient was a dose of "pelletiérine" from Paris. At all events, this indicates that there may be something genuine about the medicine of the black peoples: they have purgatives and emetics and many other things! In the main, they have recourse largely to infusions and decoctions."[1]

M. Henri A. Junod has also studied very closely what he does not hesitate to call the medical art of the

[1] Personal letter, 20th December, 1926.

Barongas: "They have divined," he says, "that nature, especially the plant world, contains remedies fit to combat the maladies that afflict poor humanity.[1] For centuries past they have made experiments and noted the results. They have no books in which to record their experiments, to describe their successes, but fathers teach sons the knowledge they have inherited from their ancestors and have increased by their own practices. The treasures thus discovered are carefully and jealously preserved in the family. Certain recipes remain the property of such and such a clan; it is known that it will be necessary to apply to such and such a person to obtain the remedy for such and such a disease. On the other hand, some of these simples are widely used; everyone knows them and has learnt to make use of them." M. Junod mentions a series of these plant remedies which *nganga* friends have been good enough to explain to him, and he concludes: "Our tribe possesses important therapeutic agencies. It discovered them in nature as a result of a hundred years of observation, and who knows but that one of these roots, if chemically analysed, might not be found to contain a new alkaloid which would help to relieve and cure the ills of suffering mankind?[2]" Mlle. Giugler, an excellent nurse on the French Mission to the Barotsi of the Zambezi, who is well acquainted with the natives and knows how to speak to them, discovered in the pharmacopoeia of the black tribes many substances, chiefly

[1] M. Junod mentions, for instance, the roots of a shrub called *nhlangoula*, which seems to be a genuine anaesthetic. It is used when one "feels his head," *i.e.* has a headache. The fresh bark is scraped away with a knife, a certain quantity of it is placed in a cloth which is folded and applied to the forehead for half a day. The same anaesthetic, combined with another called *ndjinga*, is used in cases of toothache. The two drugs are boiled, a little of the infusion thus obtained is taken in the mouth and the affected tooth drowned in it (H. A Junod, *Les ba-Ronga*, pp. 368-369).

[2] *Les ba-Ronga*, pp. 367-376

of vegetable origin, whose effects are good. Examining closely some bark and leaves, a decoction of which was recommended by a medicine-man of the country as a remedy for malaria, she discovered them to be the bark and leaves of the cinchona.

This treasure house of observations is not sufficient for the uncivilized; they add to these remedies a host of magical rites in which they have far more confidence than in the remedy itself to which they finally attributed only a supernatural value. "The remedies discovered by observation," writes M. Dieterlen, "would be too simple to inspire confidence in them. The black races want the mysterious, the supernatural, the secret and the absurd. It is that, in their eyes, which is most important. While preparing or applying their remedies, they recite the 'praises' of certain plants, of many animals and birds. These are short poems handed down by tradition, sometimes of four lines only, or long pieces in a language archaic and often incomprehensible to the profane. There are gestures to which importance is attached. When treating the 'damaged' I gave them, in a paper, a mixture of potassium iodide and bin-iodide of mercury, telling them to pour it into a bottle of water, etc. Some of them said to me: 'We seek your hand,' *i.e.* they wanted me to do the thing myself, my hand being possessed of special efficacy. . . ."[1]

[1] Personal correspondence, 20th December, 1926. M. Dieterlen writes to me in the same letter: "The medicine-man decks himself out in feathers, wears an ape-skin head-dress, fastens to his hair the gall-bladders of sheep and goats killed by his orders, and gives himself formidable and mysterious airs. His entire person constitutes a 'gesture' intended to influence the patient and to further the efficacy of the drugs." M. Essertier is right in saying that primitive intelligence has not overlooked the role of the psychic factors in most diseases, but has rather exaggerated it. "The remedies acting through the mind," says Rivers also, "were probably the first to be used by man" (*Medicine, Magic and Religion*, p. 122, quoted by D. Essertier, *Les Formes inférieures de l'Explication*, p. 32).

M. Henri A. Junod expounds many processes by which the Baronga medicine-men complicate the methods of using their natural remedies. Two beliefs here seem to intrude, in support of their faith in magic: the belief in *khombo* or misfortune, and in *nsila*, or defilement. *Khombo* is the result of the dark influence of hostile powers: illness, death, losses, sufferings of every kind, especially those that attack man unexpectedly. *Nsila* is the more or less intense contamination which misfortune produces in those whom it attacks. To live happily, one must anticipate *khombo* and remove *nsila*. This is the main object of the host of amulets, which form an integral part of the medical system of the Baronga medicine-men. Without them, a cure would never be looked upon as possible. "Certain amulets are employed to prevent accidents, especially to prevent serpents from biting those who carry them. In this case, the bag is filled with a powder obtained by carbonizing a serpent. If a reptile hidden in the grass sees anyone pass who carries this protection on his person, 'he will not bite him, but will bury his head in the sand, for he will smell the odour of his incinerated congener,' writes one of my informants. Even if the person in question steps upon the venomous reptile, or grasps it in his hands, he will not be bitten. Anyone can make these amulets and hang them round his neck. Recourse is had to this preventive measure in the spring, when the reptiles leave their holes. The custom appears to be widespread in Khocène, where abound the large *mamba*, serpents from two to three metres in length....

"Other amulets are used for healing certain diseases. There is one called *fowa*, a small bell, because it consists of a piece of root called *soungi*, enclosed in a sort of envelope or

circular box, made from an end of plaited palm leaf. This object is attached either to the neck or to the ankle, its purpose being to aid in healing wounds or ulcers, to enable the patient 'to traverse all roads fearlessly, to drink water along the roads, to approach married folk without peril, which he would be forbidden to do, unless he carried his little bell on his person ! . . .' Most amulets, however, are intended to *complete the cure*, and are used only in the final ceremony of the *hondlola* which, in most cases, terminates the medical treatment. Manifestly, the amulet has for its object not to remove the disease (*khombo*) but to dispel the defilement (*nsila*) which it is supposed to have inflicted upon the patient."[1]

Mlle. Giugler, whose story from the Zambezi has already been given, followed attentively the doings and the gestures of native "medicine-men" in the exercise of their functions. When confronted with a sick person, they always begin by consulting the knuckle-bones. At least as much attention is paid by them to this divining process as would be required to carry out a somewhat serious diagnosis. They are very eager to discover how the white nurse succeeds in determining the nature of a disease. They are so completely dominated by their own methods, that they suspect her of making use of some object which takes the place of their knuckle-bones. Once they have made the diagnosis, certain of them indicate the simples to be used, but most of them add to these indications some prescription which cannot be seen to have any rational connection with the evil, such as the following, for stomach trouble: "Go to a cross-way and having made sure that no one sees you, dig in the ground. You will find a root; boil it and drink the decoction. For the remedy to work,

[1] *Les ba-Ronga*, pp. 472-473.

it is essential that you meet no one, either going or returning." [1]

This combination—or, if preferred, collaboration—of a reasonable practice of medicine with magic is found without exception in all uncivilized peoples. Certain Australian natives, for instance, employ what seems a very rational treatment for serpent bites : ligature of the limb, suction, cauterization,[2] but this does not prevent them from treating the same bites by magic. Rite, ligature, suction, etc. appear to them as equally efficacious. They go so far as to attribute the efficacy of means which we should call rational to the fact that a magical rite has been performed. No sooner does magic appear on the scene than the mind becomes prone to attribute to it effects which it would be far more natural according to our ideas to attribute to other causes.

III

What is the exact connection between the technical arts and magic ?

Hubert and Mauss rightly state that they have always been kept apart, that a difference of method has always been felt to exist between them, that this difference, though scarcely perceptible, was probably none the less real ; and they well explain to what kind of observation this feeling, alike vague and strong, is due. " In technical arts," they say, " the effect is conceived as produced

[1] *Cf.* further ch. iii. p. 146. *Cf.* also Albert Schweitzer, *A l'orée de la forêt vierge, récits et réflexions d'un médecin en Afrique équatoriale*, p. 44. " In the Galoan tongue, I am called Oganga meaning fetishist. The Blacks have no other expression to indicate a doctor, because native healers are also fetishists. My patients regard it as logical that the one who heals diseases should also be able to cause them even from afar."

[2] Walter E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies*, pp. 157-158, 161.

mechanically. It is known to be the direct result of the co-ordination of actions, tools and physical agents. It is seen to follow immediately on the cause; the results are homogeneous with the means: the throw impels the javelin, cooking is done with fire. In addition, tradition is continually being verified by experience which is constantly testing the value of technical beliefs. The very existence of the arts depends on the continuous perception of this homogeneity between causes and effects."[1]

There is so great a resemblance between magical rites and the achievements of the technical workers that one readily supposes that they originated at the same time. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see that in grafting magic on technique, the latter becomes stationary. The man who believes in magic utilises the technical methods discovered before his time and handed down by tradition. Losing sight of the way in which these methods were discovered, and attributing to them supernatural virtue, why should he correct and develop them, why make them easier and less complex? It appears to him that, were he to make any change, he would cause them to lose their efficacy. This is a belief which, instead of urging the mind forward along the path of invention, inclines it rather to accept humbly what has been handed down to it, and to reproduce it with automatic exactitude.

"It may be that magic and science," says Father Bouvier, "often possess a sort of common treasure-store of observations, experiences and perceptions accumulated throughout the ages. In this treasure-store, however, the spurious coins of magic are not very difficult to recognise. They possess quite a different stamp from the true gold of science, or even from the base metal of pseudo-science. To

[1] *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la Magie*, p. 15.

an eye, however slightly trained, true science or what at least seems to be such, possesses the strong characteristic that it is always appealing to the idea of experimental laws and natural causality. Magic, on the other hand, is based on relations which, while quite as invariable and vital to the eyes of the ignorant as the laws of nature, are yet conceived by them as being superimposed on these laws. And though making use of the principle of causality, magic is only concerned with the ultra-phenomenal and transcendent applications of this law." "Abortive arts and magical arts," says the same observer, "are alike 'arts of doing.' When, however, both possess similar mechanical processes, specifically magical operations presuppose or set working a virtue which is inherent in them, and which no ordinary ingenuity can supply; they are supposed to function in an environment peculiar to themselves, one which no profane key, no ordinary method, could disclose. What increases the confusion, to the prejudice of preciseness of concepts, is the very fact that, in most of the cases recorded by the history of religions, this strictly magical efficacy, this strictly magical environment involves and overlaps the other."[1]

Will it suffice to say that, in the mind of uncivilized man, two ideas exist side by side: one related to our logical mentality, the other contradicting it? The truth is that one of these ideas embraces the other and stifles it. One is killing the other, has in fact already done so.

No art or science is possible without individual initiative. It may be admitted, along with the self-styled sociological school, that, in an art or a science, the principles and the means of action are elaborated collectively and preserved

[1] *Recherches de science réligieuse* Sept.-Oct., 1912 pp. 399-400.

by tradition, and that in this sense the sciences and the arts, both in their beginnings and at their full development, are collective phenomena; but this is only one side of the actual state of things, and, as Hubert and Mauss well say: "The elements being given, the individual flies with his own wings. His individual logic enables him to pass from one element to the other, and from that to its application. He is free; he can even go back theoretically to the starting-point of his technique or his science, can justify or rectify it at each step, at his own risk. Nothing is withdrawn from his control."[1]

Now, it is the very contrary that takes place in the belief in magic. Uncivilized man accepts without examination that which is bequeathed to him, afraid to modify it inadvertently in the smallest degree or clumsily to weaken its miraculous power.

This is very noticeable, for instance, in one of the technical arts most highly developed in Africa: metallurgy. As a rule, this is the speciality of definite clans addicted to the working of beds of ore, who, with undoubted skill, manufacture agricultural and craftsman's tools and weapons for the chase. Their entire art, whether it be the extraction of the ore, its treatment in blast furnaces or crucibles, or its forging, reveals a wealth of observations dating from by-gone ages, handed down from father to son. The inheritance bequeathed with these observations, however, includes various practices intended to aid technique, though, in reality, they are strangers to it. A beginning is made by eliminating the unworthy: unworthiness may result from a wholly material pollution, for instance, from some food which should not have been eaten. It may also result from misconduct causing

[1] *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la Magie*, p. 89.

impurity. Then, when the ovens have been completed in accordance with very precise rules, when the charcoal has been carefully prepared, after having placed under ancestral protection the axes and other weapons which are to remain with the head-man during the operations and which, by a kind of exorcism, are protected from evil, the master smith produces his *ntangala*, a mysterious small chest containing the " medicine " required for the series of operations : bones of all kinds of animals, skins of the most venomous serpents, ashes of the most curious plants, and, mingled with all this, the substance which has to effect the smelting of the ore. This *ntangala* is regarded as the fetish which will make the operation successful. The head smith puts it on a seat, prostrates himself before it and says this prayer : " *Ntangala*, my *ntangala*, thou knowest that I have not stolen thee ; I have acquired thee lawfully. Cheat not therefore my expectation ! " The blacksmiths and hunters pass in single file before the box, kneel, and receive on the forehead a thin layer of white earth, whilst shouts of acclamation resound outside the hut. . . . We shall not enumerate the rites that follow, nor the series of technical operations that accompany them. First of all, charcoal is made. Should the operation fail, no one attributes it to error or lack of skill. The accident can have but one cause : one or other of the blacksmiths or hunters, on the night of the blessing of the axes, has violated the ritual prescriptions. An attempt is made to find the culprit. As a rule, no one confesses. At last, suspicion falls upon some one. If he does not confess, he is given the *moavi* or trial poison, and according as he vomits or dies, he will be declared innocent or guilty. The dread of European justice has inspired a less barbarous—though equally arbitrary—method, that of divination.

Instead of giving the poison to the suspected man, it is given to his dog.

Once the charcoal is made, the time has come to employ the magical remedies. The sacrifice of two chickens is effected by two carefully chosen children. Then only is the wrath of the spirit appeased and their favour gained. Then the oven is prepared and the fire lit. It is clear that throughout this business the mind is intent at least as much on the magical proceedings as on the strictly technical operations which but little trouble is taken to perfect.

This is very noticeable in cases where the results obtained are not satisfactory. "What does the head-man then do? Will he examine his ore to see if it is of good quality, or his flux to see if it corresponds with the quality of the ore? Will he try to discover a natural cause for the failure? Yes, sometimes; but as a rule he will not. He will simply say with resignation: 'Such and such a spirit is unwilling. Let us appease it by a sacrifice!' Or he will say in resentment: 'My remedies are no longer worth anything. Let us seek others!' Thereupon he will contrive to find rarer bones, more extraordinary feathers, more ugly serpents' skins. . . . As a rule, he will angrily exclaim, 'Again our wives are misconducting themselves in the village! They are for ever thwarting our efforts!' And he will send spies to keep a close watch upon them. Woe to the poor accused or suspect woman! She will have to prove her innocence by the poison test"[1]

These details suffice to show us that, while the blacksmith's art has attained to a high level among these natives, and while this progress is due to ingenious discoveries and to the observations that have paved the way for them, it is

[1] For additional details see the study of the Reverend Father Wyckaert, of the White Fathers, *Forgerons païens et forgerons chrétiens au Tanganyika*, in *Anthropos*, vol. ix. 1914, pp. 371-381.

checked and brought to a dead-lock by all the magic which complicates the various processes and disinclines the mind from seeking the true cause of the failures encountered.

We have now put our hand upon that which, by starting the mind upon a false trail, prevents it from setting itself problems which, however modest and humble they may be, would dispose it to criticize observations, to follow them up, to supplement them, and to weigh them; the mind is warped, and the intelligence is thereby prevented from making real conquests, from profiting by those conquests; in a word, its development is stopped.

IV

This disastrous frame of mind is intensified by the semi-charlatanism of the native medicine-man, who, while believing himself endued with peculiarly efficacious powers, loses no opportunity of persuading his clients that the remedies he recommends owe their virtues essentially to what they have received from him, from his potent personality, and that they are thus the instruments of magical power. "It is to be explained," says Mackenzie,[1] "that in doctoring the simplest case, the Llingaka inculcate the belief that although they choose to give medicines, they, and not the medicines effect the cure. They 'charm' the sickness by power in them, and do not 'cure' it by the mere action of a medicine."

Moffat, too, tells us of a "rain-maker," who did not always conceal from him the limited confidence he had in his power, while striving to keep alive in his following belief in his magical art. "In order to carry on the fraud, he would when clouds appeared order the women neither to plant nor sow, lest they should be scared away. He

[1] *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, p. 389.

would also require them to go to the fields, and gather certain roots and herbs, with which he might light what appeared to the natives mysterious fires. . . . With these he would sometimes proceed to certain hills, and raise smoke. . . . He would select the time of new and full moon for his purpose, aware that at those seasons there was frequently a change in the atmosphere. It was often a matter of speculation with me whether such men had not the fullest conviction in their own minds that they were gulling the public; and opportunities have been afforded which convinced me that my suspicions were well grounded. I met one among the Barolongs, who, from some service I had done him, thought me very kind, and, before he knew my character, became very intimate. He had derived benefit from some of my medicines, and consequently viewed me as a doctor and one of his own fraternity. In reply to some of my remarks, he said, 'It is only wise men who can be rain-makers, for it requires very great wisdom to deceive so many'; adding, 'you and I know that.'" [1]

[1] R. Moffat, *Missionary Labours in S. Africa*, pp. 313-314. Regarding this individual Moffat makes the following observations: "The rainmakers, as I have since had frequent opportunities of observing, were men of no common calibre, and it was the conviction of their natural superiority of genius which emboldened them to lay the public mind prostrate before the reveries of their fancies. Being foreigners, they generally amplified prodigiously on their former feats. The present one, as has been noticed, was above the common order. He kept the chiefs and nobles gazing on him with silent amazement, while the demon of mendacity enriched his themes with lively imagery, making them fancy they saw their corn-fields floating in the breeze, and their flocks and herds return lowing homewards by noonday from the abundance of pasture. He had in his wrath desolated the cities of the enemies of his people, by stretching forth his hand, and commanding the clouds to burst upon them. He had arrested the progress of a powerful army, by causing a flood to descend, which formed a mighty river, and arrested their course. These, and many other pretended supernatural displays of his power, were received as sober truths. The report of his fame spread like wild-fire, and the chiefs of the neighbouring tribes came to pay him homage. We scarcely knew whether to expect from him open hostility, secret machinations, or professed friendship. He, like all of his profession, was a thinking and calculating soul, in the habit of studying human nature, affable, engaging, with an acute eye, and exhibiting a dignity of mien, with an ample share of self-esteem, which, notwithstanding all his obsequiousness, he could not hide." (*Op. cit.* pp. 312-313.)

In most cases, this semi-charlatan is the first to be trapped by his own deceits. The strictest witnesses do not hesitate to acknowledge this: "Many of the sorcerers themselves—the Aht sorcerers of North West America—thoroughly believe in their own supernatural powers, and are able, in their preparations and practices, to endure excessive fatigue, want of food, and intense prolonged mental excitement."[1] John Williams, who had little love for the native magicians, considered that they regarded themselves as endowed with mysterious powers, superior to those of ordinary men.[2]

To what extent, however, are they sincere? One can never say that they are so entirely. How could this be so in the case of the sorcerer Mokulu, of the Turumbu tribe, who, already having twenty-eight wives, bought a young Christian woman for the purpose of marrying her. In trying to overcome her resistance, he accused her of having been bewitched by the Catholic missionary. Nor did he hesitate to declare that he would give public proof of the witchcraft: "The healer of souls, the Christian," he said to his victim, "has buried within thy breast a magical stone which has hardened thy heart against us men. Watch well, you others, men of the Basoko tribe; I will extract this magical stone from her body, and will show it to you, so that her father may be enlightened and that you may not allow your children to follow these teachings; otherwise there will no longer be any wives for us elders and our polygamy will be at an end!" The girl had been fastened to a tree, so that she might not be able to resist the operation. Here are the details of the operation as noticed by a witness: "Mokulu had

[1] G. M. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, p. 170.

[2] *Polynesian Researches*, vol. ii. p. 226.

secretly concealed in his cheek a sharp stone, and whilst the women firmly held the poor creature against the tree, he cut open her back in a frightful manner with a blunt and jagged knife, causing her the most excruciating pain. At short distances he made a series of gashes from which the blood trickled down. Into each wound he thrust his finger, pretending to seek the magical stone. . . . Thereon he cut wider gashes in the region of the loins. Then Mokulu placed his knife between his teeth, cleverly dropped into his hand the stone which had been all the time in his mouth, thrust it into the last wound, fumbled with it and exclaimed: 'I have it, I have it!' He pressed and dug with his fingers while Sina, in fearful pain, was shrieking with despair. Finally he produced the stone, began to leap about, and, raising it aloft before the eyes of the curious spectators, said 'Look, men of the Basoko tribe! Mokulu has told the truth. Behold the magical stone which had hardened this woman's heart against us men! Let it be a lesson to you, fathers of the Basoko tribe, lash your daughters to death rather than allow them to listen to this white man, else will our women's huts be empty. Then, life will not be worth living!' . . ." How can one believe in the sincerity of this bloodthirsty conjurer?[1]

But let us turn to less tragic instances; the semi-charlatans who carry on the business of healing, know quite well that what they claim to extract from the body of rheumatic sufferers, for instance, is but one or more stones which they take out of their own mouth. Howitt

[1] This account was given me by the Reverend Father Pinard de la Boullaye who himself obtained it from the book of the Reverend Father Fraesslé, *Meiner Urwaldneger Denken und Handeln*. These pages contain the whole story of a conversion, that of Elizabeth Sina, and of its tragic ending. The tale is told at length in the *Messager du Cœur de Jésus*, 66e année, novembre 1926, pp. 597-605.

relates that one of these " murring " sorcerers said to him with reference to the quartz stones which he took from his mouth while pretending to take them from the body of the sick man : " I know what I am about. I know where they are to be found."[1] But this sorcerer was perhaps the first to take seriously his sleight-of-hand tricks. What characterises a rôle of this kind is that he who adopts it at last forgets that he is really playing a part. He is the dupe of his own jugglery. Many of the rites he is supposed to practice have never even been attempted, as a moment's reflection will convince us. For instance, there is what is called the removal of the liver fat. " The enchanter," we are told, " is supposed to approach the sleeping victim, open his side with a stone knife, withdraw the liver fat and close up the scar ; he goes away, and the other slowly dies without being aware of anything." Quite evidently this is a rite that can never have been really practised.[2] Another rite customary in the north and centre of Australia is the throwing of " death water " : " The enchanter is supposed to strike his victim with a death-dealing substance ; though, in reality, in certain cases mentioned by Roth, this weapon is not even thrown. In others, it is thrown at such a distance that it is clearly impossible to imagine that it

[1] *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la Magie*, p. 95. " For when they (the Abipones) prepare to suck the sick man, they secretly put thorns, beetles, worms, etc., into their mouths, and spitting them out, after having sucked for some time, say to him, pointing to the worm or thorn, ' See here, the cause of your disorder.' " *History of the Abipones*, vol. ii. p. 249, by Father P. Dobritzhoffer.

Brett, after describing the ceremonies connected with a sick man which the sorcerers of British Guyana perform, adds : " If the sorcerer observes signs of recovery, he will pretend to extract the cause of the complaint by sucking the part affected. After many ceremonies, he will produce from his mouth some strange substance, such as a thorn or a gravel-stone, a fish-bone or bird's claw, a snake's tooth, or a piece of wire which some malicious *youhahu* is supposed to have inserted in the affected part " (*Indian Tribes of Guyana*, pp. 364-365).

[2] *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la Magie*, p. 93.

could ever reach its goal, and by its contact occasion death. Often it is not seen to start, and never has it been seen to arrive immediately after being thrown."[1] All the same, these rites are generally supposed to be performed, people imagine this to be so, and they would think it imprudent to hint that the sorcerer knows of a certainty that he had done none of these things.[2]

Perhaps the magician is under no delusion as to the reality of what he claims to do, but he believes in magic and is convinced that others can perform the deeds in which he believes. He also persuades himself that he accomplishes these acts in a mysterious fashion and unconsciously during sleep. It must not be forgotten that, in Africa, persons accused of having "eaten the heart" of an individual, unhesitatingly acquiesce in the accusation, admitting at once their own guilt. Why should not the magician also believe that he has accomplished something the possibility of which is doubted by no one? How can a faith, which suggests and keeps alive this semi-charlatanism be in the smallest degree reconcilable with the beginnings and growth of a critical intelligence?

In this atmosphere of illusion, there is no reason why the slightest progress should be made in the method of treating disease. Is it an exaggeration to suppose that native medical practice, the result in the first place of reasonable observation, has, through the influence of belief in magic, remained hidebound for thousands of years?

One cannot insist too strongly on the disastrous influence of this belief. Magic power is a combination of invisible and intangible bonds which, despite appearances, tie together objects, individuals, or events. The relations

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 93. [2] *See* further Appendix I, *The Belief in Tiger-men.*

of objects and individuals between each other, between objects on the one hand and individuals on the other, between objects or individuals and events, are not those which the senses appear to reveal. They are different, there is about them something occult, something that eludes both reflection and will. They are what they are. And as it is generally impossible to foresee their manifestation, all intellectual effort is ineffectual in their presence. Nothing can make them intelligible, the only thing is to accept them as presented by tradition. "A trader exposes himself to serious trouble," writes Dr. Péchuël-Loesche, "who, for convenience sake, thinks of substituting a new track, even though it be shorter and more suitable, for the usual one."[1] The fact is that a track has its own secret potencies. One has had experience of it, and, so long as this experience is not unpleasant, one preserves the track: what would happen with a new road? Is it not the wisest course to pass with the utmost care by the places by which every one else has already passed? Here we have an image of the fidelity with which a man will follow, without the slightest change, all the customs inherited from his forefathers. There is complicity on the part of all to justify the course adopted by each one.[2]

[1] Quoted by Lévy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions mentales*, pp. 36-37.

[2] *Cf.* the ingenious remarks of Louis Weber in *Le Rythme du Progrès*, p. 143: "This mythical faculty is directly opposed to the faculty of utilising solid bodies, also to the new-born technique which from the beginning has differentiated man the tool-maker, *homo faber* from the rest of the Mammalia. To believe that material objects are beings similar to oneself: does not this prohibit one from treating them mechanically and making them strictly passive auxiliaries of one's own muscular force? Even in the lowest stage of his industry, the tool-maker has a practically exact and genuinely positive notion of the bodies and substances upon which he works and which he subjects to various transformations. I put aside for the moment the other differences, though striking enough, which distinguish an inanimate from an animate body. I acknowledge that the mythical imagination has passed over these differences in

V

This magic picturing of things, however incoherent it appears to us, cannot but be controlled by what, in some way, resemble guiding principles. It would be erroneous to say that there is no law in nature for uncivilized man; he acknowledges at least two: the law of similarity and the law of sympathy, which it would perhaps be more correct to call the law of community of life and of action.

The former may be stated as follows: like produces like. For instance, the Melanesians attribute to certain stones powers that correspond to the shape of these stones. A piece of water-worn coral sometimes resembles a bread-fruit. "A man who finds such a coral will lay it at the root of one of his bread-fruit trees in the expectation that it will make the tree bear well. If the result answers his expectation, he will then, for a proper remuneration, take stones of less marked character from other men and let them lie near his, in order to imbue them with the magic virtue which resides in it."[1] "The rat," writes Eug. Casalis,[2] "is singularly agile in avoiding projectiles flung at him. A rat skin will communicate this agility to any warrior who is able to procure one." "When a birth is taking place," writes M. Dieterlen, "the women who have come to help the mother remove all their clothes, their nudity invoking that of the child issuing from the womb."

"We were going for a walk with our girls," Mlle. Dogimont tells me. "They, in order to avoid leaving in

obedience to the all-powerful attraction of analogy. It remains true that if the system of mental images that involves the manufacture and technical use of an instrument had been preceded in the human mind by a system of animistic fictions, it would have been shackled and impeded from the outset, and would perhaps never have been established."

[1] *See* Codrington, *The Melanesians*, Oxford, 1891, p. 181, quoted by Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. i. p. 164.

[2] *Les Bassoutos*, p. 287.

the house a little child of whom we were taking care, had lain it in a sort of basket. They fastened this basket to a pole, and carried the child as in a kind of palanquin. A native whom we met showed great excitement. The girls explained that he assuredly believed that the child, who was being carried in the same way as a corpse, would be certain to die." [1]

This belief, forbidding one to carry a sick person in this fashion, is common in the Zambezi country. "I remember," writes M. Th. Burnier, "being summoned to the bedside of a woman very seriously ill as the result of the birth of her child. It was impossible for me to attend her on the spot, in the narrow and filthy corridor surrounding the tiny hut. I told the father that she must be carried to the station, and, as he refused to do so, I said that I would come back for her, thinking that there was a lack of porters. In the afternoon I returned, with four men and a hammock. The father prevented me from entering, declaring that his daughter must not be carried. Calling together the village folk, I told him in their presence that he must authorize me to carry away his daughter, otherwise she would die, and the fault would be his. He quietly answered, without a single villager protesting: 'Well, she will die, but she shall not be carried.' As a matter of fact, within forty-eight hours the woman was dead." [2]

The second law is formulated by Frazer in the following terms: "Things that have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed." [3] This law ex-

[1] Private conversation, November, 1926.

[2] Personal correspondence, 22nd January, 1927.

[3] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. i. pp. 52-53.

plains—or is meant to explain—that bodies, alien to each other, if brought into contact communicate to one another by a sort of contagion, their occult virtues. "When my son Georges, our first child," writes M. H. Dieterlen, "was quite small, we carried him to an old Christian woman named Mophotsi (*i.e.* she-who-gives-repose), to show him to her. She took him in her arms, looked at him, and praised his beauty; then she rubbed the child's head against her own, all covered with grey hair; this was to communicate to him her own length of days. The chief, Jonathan Molapo, possesses an ivory bracelet which belonged to one of the wives of his grandfather Moshesh, and afterwards to Moshesh himself. I would have much liked to have this bracelet for my collection of native objects, and I asked Jonathan if he would not be willing to let me have it. He sent it to me with two others, but told me that he was anxious to keep this bracelet which had been on the body of Moshesh, but that I might have the other two. Here we have the idea that 'something' of the person of Moshesh had remained attached to this bracelet and might bring good fortune to its possessor. I sent back the bracelet which I would gladly have kept. . . . I have just read in a Lessouto journal that when they presented to the chief Lérothodi his grandson Béreng, future heir to the kingdom of Lessouto, Lérothodi spat so copiously upon the child that his wife said to him: 'you have spat enough.' He remarked: 'By doing this, I appoint him my heir.' He firmly believed that his saliva would communicate to the child royal dignity and his own distinctive qualities." [1]

It is by virtue of the same law that the native medicine man is not satisfied with the infusions above mentioned.

[1] Personal correspondence, 20th December, 1926; 12th February, 1927.

"He adds to them," writes the same correspondent, "strange and foreign substances: in their superstition they reach the point of sadism,[1] birds' droppings, roasted insects, animals' dung (one day a Mosouto with whom we were visiting a zoological garden was absolutely determined to obtain possession of a small quantity of lion's dung), whale's oil, crocodile's skin, etc."

It is this law which is at the root of many actions familiar to the uncivilized. Among the Ikunguns, Indians of British Columbia, an arrow that has wounded a man should be kept away from fire by the man's friends until the wound is completely healed. If an arrow or a knife still covered with blood were thrown into he fire, the wounded man would find his condition becoming worse.[2]

At Tanna, in the New Hebrides, a native wishing to injure his enemy, does everything possible to procure some article of clothing that has been imbued with the perspiration from the man's body. If he succeeds, he rubs the article with the leaves and branches of a certain tree, rolls it in the form of a sausage, and slowly burns it. He is convinced that the victim falls ill, and that when all has been consumed, he dies.[3] At Viti, whoever has reason to suspect that others bear a grudge against him, avoids eating in their presence, and is careful not to leave

[1] The word will not be regarded as too strong, if we take the trouble to read, at the end of the book entitled, *Les ba-Ronga*, the appendices which M. Henri A. Junod had to have translated into Latin, iii. and xv. pp. 491-492.

[2] F. Boas, *Sixth Report on the North Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 25, quoted by Frazer, vol. i. p. 59.

[3] B. T. Somerville, "Notes on some Islands of the New Hebrides," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1894, p. 19. "The Eskimos," says Egède, "procure pieces of old soles from our shoes and give them to barren women whom they wish to make fruitful, they think that our nation is more fruitful than theirs, that our bodies are more stoutly built, and that our physical qualities are communicated to our garments" (*Greenland*, p. 198).

any fragment of his food, he also dresses in such a way that no portion of his clothes can be removed. Most natives, when they cut their hair, hide the clippings in the thatch of their house.[1] When the Kaffirs clean each other's heads, each one scrupulously hands over to its legitimate owner the vermin he has just removed. This is because the vermin has fed on his blood, and anyone keeping it would thereby acquire a certain power over the person who supplied the blood.[2]

A man's shadow is regarded as forming a part of himself. Hence the fear lest any attack be made upon it. In the Solomon Islands, certain places are looked upon as dangerous; consequently care is taken not to pass near them at times when the sun might cast on them the shadow of a passer-by.[3]

The image of the body, reflected in a mirror or reproduced in a photograph, is still so closely linked with the person represented as to be a kind of extension of it! So that harm done to the image entails injury to the person. "I remember," relates M. Burnier, "that at Kazungula in 1899, I wanted to take a photograph of a picturesque group of one hundred and fifty paddlers. But each time, they saw me take up my apparatus they ran away. It thereupon came into my head to get into a boat, prepare my camera without their seeing it, and, when a few yards distant from the shore, suddenly turn round and snapshot the group. They were on their guard; the photograph shows the backs of a hundred and fifty flying natives."[4]

[1] *Fidji and the Fidjians*, vol. i. p. 248.

[2] Steedman, *Wandering on Adventures in Interior Southern Africa*, vol. i. p. 266.

[3] Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 176, quoted by Frazer, vol. i. p. 218.

[4] Personal correspondence, 22nd January, 1927.

VI

If we closely examine these so-called laws of nature, we shall find that in no case are we dealing with criticised observations, or tested facts, but always with imagined links. The discoveries which the mind thinks it makes are not suggested to it by definite experiences, but solely by fantastic hypotheses, especially those inspired by the most accidental and superficial comparisons. These comparisons force themselves upon the mind, making it, as has been said, impermeable to experience and abandoning it to influences unintelligible and often grotesque.

"If an Abipon die from being pierced with many wounds, or from having his bones broken, or his strength exhausted by extreme old age, his countrymen all deny that wounds or weakness occasioned his death, and anxiously try to discover by which of the jugglers, and for what reason, he was killed." [1]

"A man travelling through the forest," says Robert Milligan, "generally carries, hanging from his neck, a goat's horn filled with medicine, the effect of which should be to make him invisible to his enemies, even if he meets them on his path. Another somewhat similar fetish will turn aside into the water the enemy's bullet, in case he should be seen all the same, and fired upon. Possibly he carries a second fetish which, if danger overtakes him, will whistle in his village, however far away he may be, and will summon friends to his help." [2]

We see more and more clearly why this belief in magic is at the root of a real disintegration of the faculties of

[1] Dobritzhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, vol. ii. p. 84.

[2] *Le Côté sombre du continent noir*, in *A l'Œuvre*, the Swiss messenger of the Mission de Paris, May-June 1920, p. 26. This article is the translation of a study that appeared in *The Missionary Review of the World*; it is a summary of two volumes by the same author, *Fetish Folk of West Africa*, and *Jungle Folk of Africa*.

observation and reasoning. Indeed, what is there that is of interest in the phenomena? Just that which eludes all the perceptions of the senses, the special "modes" of all things, animate or inanimate. And these "modes" possess hidden virtues, invisible qualities, secret powers.

The Doualas and Bassas of the Cameroon, for instance —and this is only one example in a thousand—are afraid of rock crystal. "A man touched by this stone," M. Nouvelon informs me, "will certainly be attacked by a leopard. A piece of rock crystal is placed at the entrance of an enemy's hut, so that he may be surprised into touching it and afterwards attacked by the savage beast. It was impossible for me to induce a man who had the fullest confidence in me to touch a piece of rock crystal. To justify his obstinacy, he contented himself with saying: 'There are things which you white men do not know, but which we know well. Rock crystal is harmless to the white, but it is deadly to us.'" Certainty of the existence of these hidden qualities surpasses all imagination. "At Douala, in the absence of a native clergyman, his wife refuses to tend her baby in accordance with the advice of Mme. Jean Rusillon, who is simply answered by the old reason, 'You may know quite well how to tend white children, but your medicine, however good for them, is not good for blacks.' Of course the child died. The native woman, however, is convinced that she has done her duty."[1]

These "modes," it is believed, do not appear to one who is not forewarned. If they are not revealed by a person who "knows," their effects will be suffered in ignorance of what is happening. However carefully an object may be examined, one cannot see for what reason it exercises magical power. It is useless to pry into it, as one of our

[1] Private conversation, October 1926.

scientists would study a chemical body, to determine its properties. An examination regarded as useless in itself is no longer practised. Why should the reality be an object of observation, when its profoundest, most active, and most interesting elements elude, by their very nature, the grasp of the human intelligence? The result of a belief in magic, while providing man with an imaginary explanation, is to end the uneasiness he would experience in the presence of disconcerting phenomena, to supply him with grounds for expecting victory over the causes of his fright. Man, however, pays dearly for what he receives from this belief. Having therein discovered a solace for his troubled mind, he no longer thinks of seeking elsewhere. Reassured amid disquieting circumstances, he becomes incapable of normal curiosity, inaccessible to experience. The deceptions he will meet will not appear to him as proofs of the unreality of his stubborn illusions. Should his fetishes fail him, he will not rail against the belief that has played him false; he will regard his failure as a confirmation of his faith and it is himself that he will accuse for not having been able to utilize what magic had placed at his disposal. He becomes more and more powerless to form reasonable conceptions of facts, or to regard them through any other medium than his own absurd dreams.

VII

The uncivilized man believes that he possesses powers of perception going beyond the reach of his senses. Whereas one of our scientists would employ delicate instruments and have recourse to rigorous methods of experimentation, the uncivilized man plunges headlong into the practice of divination. He endeavours to discover occult actions by the aid of other actions in nature no less

occult. The revelations of a dream will influence him infinitely more than serious inquiry and logical reasoning: what is the use of tiring oneself with vain calculations when one is sure to be led, as by the hand, through the events of life, by some ancestor seen and heard in a dream? Formerly, in New Zealand, before any warlike expedition a row of sticks was set up representing the warriors of the tribe; in front of this row was another representing the enemy. If the wind blew down backwards the sticks representing the hostile warriors, it meant a victory promised—one might say a victory arranged. If the sticks fell forward, it was a sign of certain defeat; if they fell sideways, the issue of the fight was doubtful. Doubtless this appeal to divination takes considerably less time than a critical study of the facts or an awkward reckoning of probabilities; the habit of calculation is lost and this is no gain for the intelligence.[1]

From such methods the ordeal is but a step—one that is quickly taken. An accusation is regularly accepted without examination. Why should one be afraid of listening to it? It is so easy to assure oneself whether it is well-founded or not. Perhaps in Europe we would refrain from lending an attentive ear to it; we would reflect on the awful consequences it may have; our conscience would be harassed by the fear of committing an error which might result in a real crime. The uncivilized man has no such qualms; he possesses the means of discovering the truth without brain fatigue. The ordeal is at his disposal, enabling him to dispense with laborious investigations, suppressing the very idea of such a thing and preventing his conscience from feeling the slightest hesitation. And so it is that this man, struggling with

[1] Yate, *New-Zealand*, p. 91.

fears inspired by this invisible power, is deterred from what might become a careful examination of the real facts, and is driven to other lines of enquiry that cast him into the domain of the irrational.

The ordeal is practised everywhere. The havoc produced in Madagascar, about a century ago, as a result of trial by the *tanghin*, is well known. It was frequently a means of getting rid of an enemy by poison. "The practice," says Gustave Mondain, "is far more widespread than is imagined, owing to guilty connivance, skilful precautions, and the difficulty of supervising such wide stretches of territory. Should a family discover that several of its members have disappeared within too brief a period, suspicion is at once aroused, mutual distrust follows and family life becomes difficult. No time is lost in proposing trial by the *tanghin*, and everyone eagerly consents in order to prove that he has had nothing to do with the series of misfortunes. Sometimes from eight to ten persons drink the *tanghin*, nor is it rare for death to follow in the case of one or two of the participants. The guilty are punished and the family removes its household gods a little further away. All this does not take place without preparation, sensational and secret meetings, and the final catastrophe confers upon the practice an element of attractiveness."[1]

This is not the only form of ordeal employed in Madagascar. At least four other methods are well known. These are the ordeals of the "gold water," the alligator, the ox, and boiling water. The *ranombolamena*—"gold water" is regarded as infallible. When some one is suspected of being the perpetrator of any kind of misdeed, he is condemned to drink "gold water." An infinitesimal

[1] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1917, vol. ii. p. 209.

quantity of gold dust is mixed with a little water. The accused drinks, and if his state of health is in no wise disturbed, he is acknowledged to be innocent. It is a fact, they say, that no guilty man ever drank "gold water" without being ill.[1]

Concerning the other methods, the following, according to the same witness, is the manner in which they are conducted: "The accused is led to the banks of a river frequented by crocodiles. They are enticed and when one is seen, one of the village elders invokes the Creator and the ancestors, after which the presumed culprit is flung into the water. If he crosses the river and swims back unhurt, he is acknowledged to be innocent.—The accused is taken near the place where the graves are. There he is made to grasp the tail of an ox whose head is turned in the direction of the graves. One of the village elders invokes the Creator and the ancestors, then some one strikes the ox. If he does not stir, it is a proof that the one holding his tail is innocent. The narrator of this story, the minister of a church belonging to the Norwegian Mission, told me that he had formerly witnessed experiments of this kind. Twice had he seen the ox, after being struck, remain

[1] Evidently what is here at work is auto-suggestion of irresistible power. Faith in the efficacy of this recipe is such that no guilty person will dare to expose himself to what it is regarded as capable of provoking. It frequently happens that it is not even necessary to drink this water for it to take effect; and this result, due simply to fear, is attributed to an occult virtue of the gold. M. Parisot relates the story of three Antaimoros. Two of them, victims of robbery, suspected the third. "They declared that, since nothing threw light upon this difficult situation, they must have recourse to 'gold water.' All three should drink, and the guilty man would not fail to be exposed. The suspected man firmly refused to try the experiment, simply declaring: 'It is that which caused my father's death long ago. He had committed a theft; he was made to drink 'gold water,' and he died.'" *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1920, ii. 374. These stories of death by suggestion are not infrequent. In New Zealand, for instance, if a man is aware that some one is trying to cast a spell upon him, he falls ill, and terror speedily brings about his enemy's desire. Tylor, *New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, pp. 89, 167.

motionless. The suspected man was innocent.—Water is placed in a pot to within a few fingers from the top. After it has boiled, a wand is taken, to which is attached a string, and to this string a stone. The stone is held suspended above the boiling water. An old man invokes the Creator and the ancestors, and then orders the accused to take hold of the stone. If he is guilty, the moment his hand grasps the stone, the water rises of its own accord and burns his hand." [1]

In the last three cases, as described by M. Parisot, the practice of divination is complicated by an appeal to God Himself, who is regarded to some extent as the guardian of justice and truth. This, however, is a belief which really seems to be added to the practice itself. The latter belongs essentially to the magical order of things. The confidence placed in it is by no means that which would be accorded to a divine protector of innocence, but rather is it the confidence in a power really inherent in the object or the rite employed. Quite probably the formulae or rules stated by M. Parisot are not very ancient, but show the influence of beliefs more or less recently imported into the island. Following on the Christian preaching which has penetrated a little everywhere, the natives are beginning to think of a deity who upholds the moral order of the world, and thus there comes about a combination—strange enough at times—of ideas recently introduced and of practices that existed previously.

The Reverend Father H. Dubois, S.J., former missionary in Madagascar and member of the Malagasy Academy, declares that "in legal trials, ordeals, imprecations and solemn oaths (*e.g.* in the confraternity of blood) there is no concern whatsoever about a divine guarantee," and that

[1] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1920, ii. pp. 374-375.

" they are other beings than Andriamanitra, bearing other names, who are called upon to reveal guilt or to avenge infringements of the law." [1]

M. G. Mondain, in his book specially devoted to the *Idées religieuses des Hovas avant l'introduction du christianisme*, gives us a form of ordeal by the *tanghin* which does not introduce the Supreme Being. When preparing the drink, the *umbiasa* addresses the poisonous fruit, or rather the spirit contained within it, in long imprecations, in which the following words are repeated again and again : " Listen, listen, Ramanamango (the name of the spirit), thou art god, thou hast come to judge righteously ; men have judged, but they have judged behind their back, with partiality, having regard for the bonds of friendship and family, for their own interests. Thou hast ascended to Imérina to condemn the guilty and absolve the innocent, thou has no need to leap over the blood (a practice in sorcery formerly in vogue), thou canst see by leaping over living oxen or sheep. Thou wilt not let thyself be influenced by misfortune. Thou art the cause both of life and of death." Then the arranger of the ceremony pronounces other words upon the head of the accused : " Thou wilt not allow thyself to be influenced, Ramanamango, by the power for evil of the accused. If he possess an ' ody ' (charm or amulet) for depriving the judgment water of all virtue, and if he trust in it, destroy him still more quickly, tear away his arms, rend his body and flesh, crush him to powder, stifle the breath of life within him." [2]

The Governor, M. Julien, also, when studying the Baras and other tribes of South West Madagascar, came across the

[1] " La Morale chez les Malgaches," in *Semaine internationale d'Ethnologie religieuse*, Milan session, 1925, p. 182.

[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 17-18.

ordeal by gold, but the form of imprecation which he noted is not addressed to a deity who makes use of "gold water" to manifest his justice. It is addressed to the "gold water" itself: "If this man is really the thief, may this gold water rot in his belly and cause him to die slowly; if he sleeps on his back, may the lightning strike him in that position; if he enters the forest, may the *sunguanumbé*[1] devour him; if he bathes in the river, may the crocodile eat him; if he sleeps on his side, may his liver and lungs be broken up into seven pieces; if he sits on the ground, may the *vunkuhé*[2] bite him. But if this man is innocent, may he live happily in the midst of his wives and children and may Ranahare be propitious unto him."[3]

In all these ordeals, we are concerned with processes which, by invisible forces, mechanically and materially produce the expected result. Before proceeding to the ceremony, care is always taken to perform various and complicated rites. Now, nothing in these rites indicates any strictly moral and religious idea; but all of them show the care taken to secure to the object used the entirety of its occult force. In the case of the "gold water," for instance, much less potency is attributed to bits of gold belonging to private individuals than to gold forming part of the kingly inheritance: the latter, having for generations past been used in the same tests, possess a kind of infallibility.[4] In addition, it is probable that this gold possesses within itself some of the occult virtues of men who themselves have been powerful. The trial by boiling

[1] A mythical animal whose name might well have applied to the hippopotamus, long ago when this pachyderm was common in Madagascar.

[2] An imaginary insect whose sting is supposed inevitably to cause death.

[3] *Notes et Observations sur les tribes sud-occidentales de Madagascar*, *Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires*, 1926, Numbers 27-28, p. 225.

[4] G. Julien, *loc. cit.* p. 226.

water or red-hot iron never takes place without the presence of the *Makarivu*, a sort of amulet the virtue of which is particularly active in this trial. Two very important taboos are enjoined upon the individual who has to undergo the trial: he must abstain from taking food in an earthenware dish and from drinking water by means of a ladle. Even though he be innocent of the crime imputed to him, violation of these taboos would recoil upon himself.

The part of the crocodile in the ordeal is not to serve as instruments for a God bent upon deciding between the just and the unjust. They are supposed to be endowed with supernatural power. "The natives," says Ellis, "invoke the forbearance of the crocodiles with prayers or seek protection by charms, rather than attack them; even the shaking of a spear over the waters would be regarded as an act of sacrilegious insult to the sovereign of the flood, imperilling the life of the offender the next time he should venture on the water."[1] The infallibility of these animals is generally recognised in Central Africa: "When one person," says R. H. Milligan, "accuses another of a serious offence, they are both bound to stakes placed some distance away on the river's banks and in close proximity to the crocodiles. The one whom the crocodile seizes first is considered to be guilty. The other is set free."[2]

The Azandes, a Congo tribe, have three methods of divination or ordeal. The most popular, which is least costly—it even costs nothing at all—is the *dakpwa*. Two small sticks are taken, the one of *know* wood, and the other of *kpoyo* wood. A hole is made at the top of a termitarium, the home of the akedos, one of the many kinds of edible white ants. As soon as the akedos appear in the hole, the

[1] *Three Visits to Madagascar*, p. 297.

[2] *Op. cit.* see *A l'Œuvre*, July-August, 1920, p. 38.

ceremony begins. Holding the *know* stick in the left hand and the *kpoyo* stick in the right, the consultant asks : " Is this thing true ? If it is, may the *know* be eaten by the ants, and the *kpoyo* remain intact." Saying this, he thrusts the *know* stick into the hole. Then he continues : " If it is false, may the *kpoyo* be eaten and the *know* remain intact." He also introduces the *kpoyo* into the hole at some distance from the *know*. Then he fills up the hole with earth. The following day, they go to see which of the sticks has been eaten by the ants. If both sticks have been eaten to the same extent or are alike intact, the consultation is regarded as null and void, and some evil influence is supposed to have checked the efficacy of the trial or some particular ritual direction to have been neglected.

The so-called *iwa* or *bulu* method consists in trying to make one plane surface slide over another (a sort of smooth lid over a small table of special shape). One of the surfaces has been rubbed with a mixture containing a little gum. A number of precautions are observed, intended to keep the person concerned in a state of cleanness. If the sliding does not take place, it represents an affirmative answer to the question asked. If it takes place quite easily, the answer is a negative one. It sometimes happens that, notwithstanding all the ritual observances, the *iwa* becomes " cold," *i.e.* shows by its incoherent replies that it has lost its prophetic value. The remedy is to dig a hole in the middle of the path and bury the instrument in it. On the following day, the *iwa* has again become efficient : passers-by, unwittingly treading on the place where it is buried, have withdrawn that which was taking away its virtue.

Finally, the trial by *bengé* consists in administering a certain quantity of poison called *bengé* to chickens—when

not to a human being—in accordance with a prescribed ritual. Strict rules are enjoined upon those who gather the liana called *bengé*, the root of which contains poison. Prohibitions are numerous; if a single one is neglected, the *bengé* is regarded as having lost the whole of its power and virtue. Similar restrictions are enjoined upon those whose duty it is to prepare the poison. This substance is administered to a chicken; then the substance itself is addressed in the following words: "*Bengé*, *bengé*, who art in the chicken's belly, reveal the truth to us. If this man has really committed the evil deed of which he is accused, kill the chicken. But if this is not so, if he has not done this wrong, do not kill the chicken, let it live." The Azandes have recourse to this method in the most varied circumstances: to establish the guilt or the innocence of an accused man, to discover whether testimony is truthful or not, to ascertain the reality or the unreality of a stated fact, to investigate the cause of illness or of death, to learn the future, to know, for instance, whether a serious illness or even death is threatening, whether happiness or misery will result from living in a certain dwelling, whether a projected journey will be lucky or unlucky, whether such or such an act should be done or left undone.[1]

It is interesting to note that, in many districts—as we have just seen in the case of the Azandes—the practices that seem characteristic of the ordeal are exactly those to which recourse is had in cases where there is no question of judgment of a culprit. An explorer arrives in some part of Central Africa. The natives wonder if he brings misfortune with him. Are they to welcome him or not? To make sure, they administer to a cock the poison *ipomme*.

[1] *Les Procédés d'augure ou de divination chez les Azande*, by the Reverend P. C. R. Lagaé, Dominican Missionary, Congo, May 1921, pp. 709-730.

If the cock vomits the poison, it is a proof that the stranger comes in a friendly capacity. If, however, the cock dies, it is an enemy who has come, he must be sent away. "When you first came," said King Lewanika to Coillard the missionary in 1888, "the Barotsi, suspecting your intentions, hastened to consult the knuckle-bones, and to administer *muati* (a strong poison) to a number of hens. Some died, others lived; hence the ambiguous messages sent to you. They dared not openly forbid you to enter the country, and yet they dreaded to receive you." [1]

The poison used for simple divination is that employed in criminal trials. It therefore—not the intervention of some justice-dealing deity—is charged with revealing the truth.

Is there not an absolute contradiction between faith in divination—whether by ordeal or by some other method—and recourse to a critical examination of the facts? There is no reason for instituting this critical examination once it is accepted that a magical operation mechanically dispels the discomfort of uneasiness and doubt—a discomfort which M. Essertier rightly regards as leading man to seek an explanation which, sooner or later, must set him on the path of truth.

To uncivilized man nothing is absurd, in the meaning we attribute to this word; he becomes more and more disinclined for examination and criticism which would be impossible apart from logical processes. He feels the disturbing attractiveness of the mysterious and fantastic. He is at the mercy of an emotion which will take possession of him, a prey to the most grotesque suggestions he will blindly make the most disastrous decisions. His madness, too, may be so contagious as to infect thousands of others. "In South Africa a man named Umhlakasa and a girl

[1] *Sur le Haut Zambèze*, p. 302. Lévy-Bruhl quotes similar cases in *La Mentalité primitive*, pp. 250-251.

named Nongkause gave out that they had seen and spoken to the spirits of men long since dead, and many of the Xosas believed them.

"Their story was that the spirits instructed them to tell the people to kill and eat all their cattle and destroy their grain, when vast herds more beautiful than any they had ever seen would rise out of the ground, waving fields of millet would spring up, and the brave warriors of their race in times of old would return to life and aid them to drive the white man and the Fingos into the sea.

"Kreli, the great chief of the Xosa tribe, lived beyond the Kei, and was not under British rule. He issued an order that the command of the spirits was to be obeyed, and it was carried out not only in his own country, but in British Kaffraria, where the captains still regarded him as their head. The English officials and missionaries feared that the matter would end by the Xosas hurling themselves in an armed mass upon the colony, and they tried to induce the deluded people to desist from destroying their property, but in vain. The cattle were killed and eaten and the grain was destroyed. The day came on which the herds were to rise from the ground, the fields of millet to spring into existence, and the dead warriors to return to life, but it passed by without anything unusual happening.

"Dreadful suffering followed. The famished Xosas tried to get into the colony as suppliants for food, but many thousands died on the way. . . . Supplies of grain were sent by the government to King-William's Town, so that many were saved. But the power of the tribe was for the time utterly broken, and for many years afterwards the people belonging to it were mostly in service with farmers in the colony."[1]

[1] *Short History of South Africa*, by Maskew Miller, pp. 164-165.

CHAPTER III

MAGIC AND MORAL DISINTEGRATION

THE result, then, of a belief in magic is to intensify the disposition to regard as real that which is not so. It thus inevitably carries with it a lowering of the inner life. No longer seeking rational causes to explain external phenomena, uncivilized man no longer tries to account for his actions by clear and definite motives; he abandons himself to the capricious influences of the moment. Then begins a state of intellectual disintegration, which ends in bringing about a state of moral disintegration.

I

Indifference to truth, which appears to characterize uncivilized peoples, is not confined to the intellectual order of things. It affects practical life. Can we wonder that it assumes its most serious aspect in the inveterate habit of lying? We are but too well acquainted with that kind of mental twist from which uncivilized man finds it so difficult to free himself.[1] Its importance could not be exaggerated. The private notes of M. H. Dieterlen now before me are regrettably rich in details of this kind. Here are a few chance ones:

"16*th December*, 1895.—Malissa Melo and Mankiti, whom I was to baptize, were accused of drinking *yoala*;

[1] Cf. *Psychologie de la conversion chez les peuples non-civilisés*, vol. i. p. 153.

in my presence they denied everything and asked me to investigate. It was at once discovered that they were drinking the liquid, and they confessed. Thus, a fortnight previous to their baptism they tell a downright lie. I shall not baptize them.

"*3rd December*, 1898.—Rosa is accused of being with child. In such matters, public opinion is extremely farsighted and infallible. I have spoken to her, she denies all. Two days afterwards, she confesses. Not to begin by denying and lying is not admissible, it is impossible, even though the thing is manifest and will become continually more so. To lie seems necessary; they lie for lying's sake, instinctively, knowing that it is useless. It is an instinct that impels them, a national tradition.

"*9th December*, 1900.—G. M. consults me for a local malady, the cause of which I see immediately. He denies everything, in spite of my encouraging him to tell the truth, so that I may at least know what treatment to apply and notwithstanding my promise to keep the matter secret. I send him back without treatment. Six weeks later, he returns and confesses. For them to begin by lying is quite irresistible, it is a sort of instinct."

Primarily, the true cause of this propensity to falsehood is a moral one. M. Dieterlen looks upon it mainly as the desire to avert the foreseen consequences of confession and unwelcome annoyances. "There are also things which are denied simply so as not to frighten people or not to torture oneself: the word 'death,' for instance, or the idea of death, which is not expressed for fear of disquieting people, and, consequently, of exposing them to death." And yet, must we not go deeper, and once more see here at work that which is at the very centre of all mental life in inferior societies? Among the uncivilized, social life

seems to be a perpetual invitation to feign sentiments that are not experienced and to conceal those that really are felt. In another work[1] I have dealt with this preoccupation in connection with the various emotions expressed in mourning. We found that, under the pretext of exhibiting virile qualities, they reach a state of genuine insensibility: hardheartedness is the confirmation of what began by being a social lie. This kind of falsehood assumes every form. "A girl is betrothed," relates Mlle. Kuntz (Zambezi), "when she meets her future husband, she must act as though she did not know him. At the time of the marriage ceremony she must pretend to sulk before the man to whom she is united, as though this union were painful to her." The historical origin of this custom concerns us but little. Whatever it be, the custom has its psychological effects, which alone interest us now. How could scrupulously disguised feelings help remaining superficial? How could they become strong and deep? The husband is well aware that a comedy is being played, but it is the custom. "When the woman has a baby," continues Mlle. Kuntz, "she will have to take care not to think it pretty, or, if she does, she must not say so. In particular she would never forgive her women friends who came to compliment her, for exclaiming on the child's beauty. They must say it is very ugly; should they act otherwise, they would be accused of casting a spell upon the new-born babe."[2] Here again we are confronted with the fatal belief in occult powers. These women are afraid of attracting to the child the attention of the spirits hovering in the air, or, at all events, of releasing a mys-

[1] Cf. *Psychologie de la conversion chez les peuples non-civilisés*, vol. ii. p. 260.

[2] If the baby is a girl and really pretty, care will be taken to give her a name that conceals her beauty.

terious and evil influence by uttering certain words. Consequently, falsehood is governed by belief. How could the kink help becoming more and more pronounced?

"In Zambezi," relates the same witness, "when a son is born to the king, the fact must not be stated: the people are informed that a daughter has been born. Is any one deceived by this false report? Impossible to say. But is it with impunity that the truth is regularly flouted and that people adopt the habit of believing the contrary of what they are told? It is not the living only who are deceived. Even the dead are not out of the reach of falsehood; indeed, lying is assiduously practised in regard to them. When a member of the family has died, the main concern is to prevent his spirit from returning and doing evil to the living. Instead of carrying the corpse out by the door, an opening will be made in the wall through which the body will be carried. All this has no other purpose but to baffle the spirit. Much food is supplied to the dead; but, instead of meat, they are given pieces of bark which they are invited to regard as meat. . . . When anyone has had an extraordinary dream, he will not tell it, or will only do so in part. One would be too much afraid, by saying what one has dreamt, of summoning it into existence. Out in the country there is an extraordinary dread of monstrous animals and formidable serpents, of which the sight alone is sufficient to cause death. No one claims to have seen them, though many assert that they have encountered them but have managed to avoid seeing them. When a man wishes to explain that he has not seen them, he says that he has been dazzled, blinded, so to speak, by some marvellous happening. In reality, he has been terrified by some-

thing unwonted that has aroused the idea of these monsters in whose existence he believes. He imagines that he has, at all events, been given a hint of something. He asserts, however, that he has seen nothing, in order to avoid the disastrous consequences that an admission of having seen something might involve."

Is not this concern for removing a painful emotion capable of producing denials which seem to us stupendous? Here is one that I find in a letter of Mlle. Josette Debarge (Cameroon). She says that she attended the funeral of a head-man. Suddenly she became aware of the distant, though quite distinct, sound of a waterfall. She asked those nearest to her: "Where is that waterfall?" They answered: "We can hear nothing." And yet the sound was quite clear. She insisted, but they continued to tell her that they heard nothing. Puzzled, she made enquiries, when some one explained that whoever heard that waterfall would die. Therefore no one must acknowledge that he has heard it. By this denial they become safe from the peril of death. Is it possible to imagine a more determined effort to thwart the emotion which some dreadful phenomenon might call forth? Formal denial here becomes a paradoxical method of self-defence. They have recourse to it without any regard to truth. How could such a practice, habitual under all circumstances, end otherwise than in an irresistible propensity to general falsehood? In the atmosphere of magic, the natural candour of the intellect founders and disappears.

II

Any one who finds it tiresome to make habitual use of his reason readily becomes the sport of his passions. And

these assume the strangest forms, so strange that they sometimes appear incomprehensible to us. It would be interesting, for instance, to make a special study of suicide among the uncivilized. One often asserts that it is impossible to find, in these lower grades of society, a single case of voluntary death that in the slightest degree resembles those generally found in civilized races. This assertion is dogmatical. Is it well-founded? Whilst I am reflecting on this question, Dr. Reutter tells me of three cases he has recently observed on the banks of the Zambezi; in each case a man's sole reason for suicide is desertion by the woman he loves; rage, and after attempted murder, despair ending in self-destruction. About the same time M. Hermann, of the Gabun, tells me of women who have killed themselves in order to follow into the Beyond some one they love, and continue to live with him. They do not act from social obligation, but from sentiment alone. M. Rusillon, of Madagascar, tells me of another woman who, forsaken by her husband, passionately seeks the spot to which he has fled, rejoins him in the hope of winning him back, sees her tender love scorned, and, overcome by despair, kills herself.

With these cases we compare the one related by M. Maurice Leenhardt in his *Catéchumène canaque*. Here a young wife hangs herself from grief at her husband's infidelity (p. 10-11). These examples scarcely agree with a theory which is usually regarded as beyond the pale of discussion, viz., that love, in the special meaning we attribute to the word, is non-existent among primitive races.

If one desired to examine this matter thoroughly, it would be necessary to consider, apart from the special forms of love just envisaged, others that are not less

natural, *e.g.* a mother's attachment to her child. Here is a scene witnessed by Mme. Lantz: a man and his young wife had just brought to her a baby, one month old, almost a skeleton. The little one was on the point of death. "What could I say to the parents? It was too late to attempt anything. The father held the child; the mother by his side, silent and impassive, as though insensitive to what was happening. I gently tried to tell them that I could do nothing, that no medicine could any longer save the little one. They went away, apparently calm. Ten minutes later, agonized cries for help were heard. There was some one in the water! It was the poor mother who, shortly after entering the canoe, had thrown herself into the river with the intention of drowning herself. And just before she had seemed so cold and indifferent! The husband, embarrassed by the child, was obliged to place it in the bottom of the canoe and, calling for help the while, to plunge into the water to save his wife. A canoe full of children, attracted by the cries, came to the mother's aid. She was unwilling to allow herself to be lifted out of the water and resisted with all her might. Finally, seated in the canoe, she picked up and nursed the crying child, though without raising her head or looking around. . . ."[1] Could not many a civilized man or woman see in such tragedies a reflection of his own emotions? Let us not form our impressions too rapidly. If it is scientifically unjustifiable to see in these uncivilized peoples only what is common to them and to us, perhaps it is equally unjustifiable to be willing to take into account only what separates them from us. The difficulty is to see, but without confusion, what really appertains to man, in the general sense of the word, and

[1] *In Memoriam, Madame Edouard Lantz*, p. 75.

what specifically characterizes the uncivilized peoples. Undoubtedly there exists in the latter the natural play of elementary feelings which they possess in common with ourselves, and it would perhaps be both absurd and pretentious to try to explain, by reasons utterly alien to ourselves, the sufferings of a wife abandoned by her husband or those of a mother unable to save her child from death. Nor must we refuse to see why and how a perfectly intelligible grief can and must be coloured or intensified under the influence of beliefs peculiar to these beings. In all the cases just cited, we are confronted with a sense of despair. This phenomenon is characterized by a moral depression which cannot be overcome. Death affords a means of escape from one's suffering. And so despair produces the same effects among the most diverse races. All the same, it must be confessed that among the uncivilized, it is complicated by elements that do not exist amongst ourselves. The wife abandoned by her husband has the sensation that she is leaving normal life; the bond that united her, not only to a man, but also—and perhaps more especially—to a family group, is broken. She is despoiled of the life-giving forces which came to her from the group with which she was in communion. The sadness she feels is interpreted by her through the prism of her ancestral beliefs. It seems to her that she is robbed of the vital atmosphere she breathed, that she is beginning to die. Her suicide merely precipitates the event which, to her, was becoming more and more definite. Similarly, the woman spoken of by Mme. Lantz had already lost her other children, one after another. It seemed to her that the curse of the occult powers had fallen upon her, and that, in destroying herself, she was but following out her destiny in accordance with the will of these powers.

Perhaps we must seek further and take into account the beliefs of the uncivilized man as to the condition of the dead after leaving the visible world. According to the most widespread conception of this state of being, he who leaves this world finds his clan in the Beyond, and shares its life. Now, on this side of the veil, the child, while forming an integral part of the clan, cannot live without his mother: it is she who feeds and cares for him, who protects him and defends him from accidents and suffering. How could he be self-sufficing in that clan to which he is about to return, but to which his natural protectress is not accompanying him? This is an anxiety that weighs heavily on the parents, especially the mother, and is quite capable of suggesting to her what we regard as a desperate act, though in reality it is an act expressive of the utmost solicitude. J. Carver met with what is perhaps a somewhat extraordinary case among the Red-Skins by reason of the intensity of the feelings displayed, though it affords us a kind of microscopic glimpse of anxious concern altogether *sui generis*. "Whilst I remained among them," he says, "a couple whose tent was adjacent to mine, lost a son of about four years of age. The parents were so much affected at the death of their favourite child that they pursued the usual testimonies of grief with such uncommon rigour, as through the weight of sorrow and loss of blood, to occasion the death of the father. The woman, who had hitherto been inconsolable, no sooner saw her husband expire, than she dried up her tears, and appeared cheerful and resigned. As I knew not how to account for so extraordinary a transition, I took an opportunity to ask her the reason of it; telling her at the same time that I should have imagined the loss of her husband would rather have occasioned an increase

of grief, than such a sudden diminution of it. She informed me, that as the child was so young when it died, and unable to support itself in the country of spirits, both she and her husband had been apprehensive that its situation would be far from happy; but no sooner did she behold its father depart for the same place, who not only loved the child with the tenderest affection, but was a good hunter, . . . than she ceased to mourn. She added, that she now saw no reason to continue her tears, as the child . . . was happy under the care and protection of a fond father, and she had only one wish that remained ungratified, which was that of being herself with them." [1]

Why should not the same belief work in the case of the husband or the wife who has lost, not a child, but the other partner of the union? "An old Indian captain," we are told, "was always declaiming against Christianity. . . . His wife died a Christian. Her husband, who loved her tenderly, thought he could not show his affection for the dead woman more truly than by becoming a Christian also. . . . He resolves to join her as speedily as he can, often visits her tomb at a distance of two leagues from here. He hides from us his plans and persists in his desire to be baptized. After a two years' trial his wish was granted. . . . Once he asks me if Christians are not allowed, when tired of life, to strangle themselves, so that they may the more speedily enter the land of the blest. . . . The night following his baptism he hanged himself on the very spot where he usually slept." [2] "In becoming a Christian," remarks M. Lévy-Bruhl, "his wife had separated herself from the group in the other

[1] *Travels in North America*, pp. 403-404, quoted by Lévy Bruhl, *L'Ame primitive*, pp. 394-395.

[2] *Relations de la Nouvelle-France* (*éd. Thwaites*), lxii. (1682), pp. 62-64 (P. de Lamberville), quoted by Lévy-Bruhl in *L'Ame primitive*, p. 392.

world. The old man could not endure the idea of her remaining alone."

And so we repeat that, while moral depression produces similar results in uncivilized man and in ourselves, it may be strangely aggravated by the ideas which are peculiarly his own. M. Rusillon noted the following case, not an altogether rare one. A man puts on one side some oxen that are to be sacrificed at his burial. One of them happens to die. The man is affected thereby though not very profoundly disturbed. When, however, another animal dies, he begins to regard things as suspicious: certainly, he reflects, an enemy is working against him and killing his oxen. The epidemic continues its baneful effects upon his cattle. We speak of epidemic; but he thinks of the hostile doings of a stranger, of poison and magical spells. A sort of anguish creeps over him: his enemy would not thus succeed in his work of death if he himself were not abandoned by the spirits upon whom he was wont to rely. That which sustained him in life now proves a broken reed. There is nothing left for him in life now but to die, and, his mind filled with the morbid idea, he passes to his death.

The same witness tells me of another case which caused considerable stir in Madagascar. It happened some years ago, at the time of the V.V.S. affair.[1] In one of the villages, the administration informs the head-man of the canton that there are members of the famous secret

[1] In Madagascar these initials are frequently used for a secret society, the *Vy-Vato-Sakelika*, meaning "that which is as difficult to break as iron and stone, and that has many ramifications." The origins of this movement are obscure and manifold. In the region of Fianarantsoa, men's passions are somewhat complex, in particular there is a desire for vengeance which is hard to explain. On the side of Tananarivo, the movement was a politico-libertarian one. Its supporters had but a vague idea of the aim they were pursuing. A number of them must have based their illusions on instruction sometimes unskilfully imparted and on the thoughtless way in which they have been told of the

society among the people living around him. He institutes an inquiry, but does not discover any. In his zeal, however, he denounces a few villagers, though he has no grounds for doing so. These are arrested; they protest against the accusation brought against them. The chief sends them to Tananarivo to explain themselves. . . . Here the tribunal, taking seriously the accusation made by the head-man of the canton, turns a deaf ear to their protests and condemns them to be transported to Anosilava. . . . Furious at thus being unjustly condemned, these men then turn upon the one to whom they owe their misfortune. They draw up a letter in which they declare that they really are guilty, but that their head-man is the one who has denounced them. The head-man of the canton is arrested. He is judged; his denouncers, while continuing to declare themselves guilty, accuse him; he is condemned and transported to the same small island. Here, his fellow-convicts make life hard for him, until the time comes when he can endure it no longer. One day he ascends a steep crag and there, in the sight of his companions, raises his arms to heaven. Then, using ritual imprecations, he accuses himself of the falsehood he has told, asks forgiveness of his ancestors and of all those he has injured, and, flinging himself from the crag, lies stretched on the ground with a broken skull. We may call this suicide from remorse; we may also see in it a desperate way of escaping from a cruel and inextricable situation. Must we not also see in it the effect of the suffering experienced by a man who feels himself banned from communion with the occult powers of his race and

French Revolution. Notwithstanding the presence amongst them of people who were nominally Christian, most of them were held in the tenacious grip of traditional paganism; this explains the mysterious ceremonies and the solemn oaths used in the society.

who, by an act akin to a religious rite, wishes to be restored to communion with these powers ?

Let us try to examine the problem even more closely.

Durkheim, who has studied suicide with so much care, includes the cases observed among inferior societies under one or other of the three following categories : (1) the suicide of men who have reached the threshold of old age or are afflicted with disease ; (2) the suicide of wives on the death of their husband ; (3) the suicide of dependents or servants on the death of their chief. In these three cases he sees a sacrifice regarded as compulsory. The individual kills himself, not because he claims the right to do so, but—a far different matter—because it is his duty. Should he fail in this obligation, he is punished by dishonour, and also, as a rule, by religious chastisements. Durkheim points to many suicides whose immediate and apparent motive is extremely futile. " Titus Livius, Caesar, Valerius Maximus tell us, not without mingled astonishment and admiration, of the tranquillity with which the barbarians of Gaul and Germania inflicted death upon themselves.[1] There were Celts who undertook to allow themselves to be killed for wine or money.[2] Others pretended to shrink neither from the flames of a conflagration nor from the waves of the sea.[3] Modern travellers have observed similar practices in a host of inferior societies. In Polynesia a slight offence is often sufficient to make a man commit suicide.[4] The same thing happens among the North American Indians : a family quarrel or a fit of jealousy may be the cause why

[1] Caesar's *Gallic War*, vi. 14 ; Valerius Maximus, vi. 11 and 12 ; Pliny, *Natural History*, iv. 12.

[2] Posidonius, xxiii. *ap. Athen. Deipno*, iv. 154.

[3] Elien, xii. 23.

[4] Waitz : *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, vi. p. 115.

a husband or wife kill themselves.[1] Among the Dacotahs and the Creeks, the slightest disappointment often leads to the most desperate resolutions.[2]

Durkheim does not look upon these suicides as differing from compulsory suicide. While public opinion does not formally impose them, it certainly regards them favourably. "As it is therefore a virtue—the virtue *par excellence*—not to hold on to existence, praise is bestowed on him who renounces it on the slightest solicitation of circumstances, or even from simple valour."[3]

May we be allowed to quote a particularly striking case. I take it from the missionary Rusillon. "The Sakalaves are divided into numerous clans, from seventy to eighty. These clans make it possible to discover when and how an entire portion of the people originated. One of these clans deserves special mention, the *Jangoa*. It was specially appointed to the service of the kings, possessing privileges of its own; its members alone, for instance, could repair the roof of the royal hut, because such work, forcing them to ascend higher than the king's head, represented a great honour. Another privilege was that, in the case of a grave misdemeanour, the guilty person could not be put to death. This was considered to be the reward of the clan, whose special duty it was to supply men or women destined to accompany the king, when he died, to 'Ambomdrombé,' the abode of the departed. The sacrifice was of a voluntary nature and became genuine suicide: for several days the people awaited one or more who would be willing to offer themselves for death, and when the number was complete they

[1] *Ibid.* vol. iii. 1st part, p. 102.

[2] Mary Eastman, *Dacotah*, pp. 89 and 169; Lombroso, *L'Uomo delinquente*, 1884, p. 51; Durkheim, *Le Suicide*, p. 239.

[3] Durkheim, *Le Suicide*, p. 240.

went away to die on the tomb of their chief, amid a vast concourse, accompanying the king, his possessions, and flocks, to serve him beyond the grave. Those who committed suicide were covered with flowers and wreaths. They went to their death as to a festival, and their memory is kept alive down to the present time."

This statement of M. Rusillon clearly confirms Durkheim's explanations, which are largely true. All the same, it is by no means certain that they exhaust every possible case. It may happen that an individual kills himself in a mere fit of anger, through some outburst we are unable to understand ; he puts an end to his own life, if he cannot fall upon his enemy. Apparently, this signifies nothing but fury raised to a paroxysm blinding its victim and leading him, in his desire for destruction, to massacre himself. Do we not feel that such acts belong to the realms of the absurd ?

The absurd ?..That is soon said. It is difficult to keep the word out of one's mind. In reality, however, beneath the apparent stupidity of an act which at first we are unable to understand, there finally emerges a single thought : the idea of vengeance. By committing suicide, the man, carried away by anger, hurls himself into the world of invisible spirits, whence he will inflict every form of savagery upon a foe whom, in the ordinary conditions of life, he is unable to reach or injure. It is really this that gives its true meaning to the suicide related above by Maurice Leenhardt, only one aspect of which we had dwelt upon. Now let us examine the deed as a whole, in all its bearings. " A young wife has hanged herself. Close to the dead woman stands her husband with bowed head. An old psychological *nata* addresses him aloud : ' Ah ! You wanted to conceal your fickle conduct !

Now the death of your wife has denounced you ! What will you do now ? Why did you wrong your wife ? ' The husband's infidelity has brought about in the wife a release of the vital forces she has inherited from her ancestors, a state of discouragement which decides her to commit suicide. You have injured my life : I will not leave you alone. Here we have the idea of injury, it is not even a case of retaliation. The situation is clear : the husband will be terrified by the apparitions of his wife pursuing him day and night." [1]

This is not peculiar to New Caledonia. M. Rusillon finds that it happens regularly in Madagascar in those parts of the island that have not yet—or only recently—been evangelized. In the Cameroon, M. Pierre Galland noted the following fact. A man is tried in a law court, condemned to death, and executed. His father, convinced that some one he does not know is the cause, inflicts death upon himself so that he may go and avenge

[1] *Le catéchumène canaque*, pp. 10-11. This idea seems so natural to the Kanakas that they do not find it astonishing in the tales and legends they relate. M. Maurice Leenhardt is about to publish, in the documents of the Institute of Ethnology of the University of Paris, stories which he has obtained personally from natives who have written them out for him in Houaïlou, their own, language, and which he has translated into French. Several of these tales mention suicides inspired by the anxious concern of which he has just spoken, and which as a rule are caused by the husband's infidelity. Here is one, however, in which self-inflicted death is induced by simple irritation. A man, leaving his hut for a journey, had requested his wife not to take their child to the sea. As he was far away, about noon the mother took the child to bathe it in the water. The child saw a prawn. He was frightened and began to cry. The mother however fished out the prawn, and she and the child ate it. When the father returned the same evening, he took the child in his arms. " Ah ! " he said to the mother, " this child's breath smells of fish, why is this ? " " I caught a prawn this afternoon and we both ate it." The father became violently angry. This annoyed the mother, who returned to her hut, placed a liana in the joists of the ceiling, made a slip-knot into which she thrust her own head and that of the child. Both of them died. The father, coming later, saw them and wept for a long time. The grandparents, hearing his sobs, came hurrying up. " What are you doing ? " " I scolded them because of the prawn which the mother caught down there in the water, and now they have destroyed themselves."

his son's death in the Beyond. In Gabun, M. Hermann noted many similar cases. It is not only an invisible power which the suicide mobilizes, it is also the clan of the suicide himself that bestirs itself and holds accountable the clan of the offender as the cause of everything. By bringing about a death, he has wronged a whole group. It matters little that death was self-inflicted; it would not have taken place but for the offence. And so an event of this kind becomes the occasion of a great palaver: the loss inflicted on the group must be redressed. This accords so well with the customs of the natives of the Congo, that it is no infrequent event for a child, without going to the extreme of suicide, to inflict a wound upon himself solely in order to cause trouble to a comrade of another clan who has insulted or molested him in one way or another.[1]

Are there not even cases in which the individual who kills himself pursues in the next world the invisible beings that annoy him? "One of my parishioners of Mafubé," relates M. Ramseyer, "was tormented by what he called 'evil spirits.' He had restless dreams, provoked either by illness or by an uneasy conscience. To be rid of them, he hanged himself. His brother declared to me: 'Now it will be the turn of the evil spirits down there (or up there), who made him suffer!'" This one example in a thousand shows us that the native, even when puzzling us by the apparent irrationality of his act, is frequently following out *his own* idea. We do not always understand it, since it happens to be radically different from the ideas that *we* may be entertaining.[2] We use the word

[1] Personal conversations with H. Rusillon, P. Galland, and Ch. Hermann.

[2] Whilst preparing this work, I was told of a boy who had killed himself in a town in the centre of France, for no other reason than that he had been scolded by his schoolmaster. Cases of this kind are not infrequently met with in the daily press. Here also we are confronted with the idea of revenge.

"idea" to indicate the mental image which, in the mind of uncivilized man, determines conduct the significance of which we have some difficulty in grasping. This term, however, should not be employed without due precaution. The beliefs in question are not always so precise as we imagine them to be. In order to attempt to make somewhat clear both to ourselves and to others what takes place in the subjects studied, we are inclined to express it with a distinctness which is lacking in their thoughts. The beliefs, certain of which we note specially, really act upon uncivilized man, but they act mainly in their affective aspect, through the emotions they call forth. The intensity of the emotion here replaces the precise distinctness of the idea, and this enables us to understand how it is that beliefs, never very explicit, co-exist in a somewhat pêle-mêle disorderly fashion, though containing obvious contradictions. Can we be surprised to find that uncivilized man, instead of pursuing a line of strict reasoning, is so often swayed entirely by passion?

III

Belief in magic creates for uncivilized man a world governed by the unforeseen, in which uncertainty is the dominant feeling. Now, uncertainty inevitably begets fear. How can one help wondering with strained anxiety what the morrow will bring forth, that is to say, what will, to-morrow, be the wicked fancy of those who

The child who kills himself—for they are invariably children in such cases—has often the desire to cause annoyance to the individual who has irritated him. Suicide is one way of drawing upon the person the blame of the general public, or of causing him remorse. And this happens without this desire being complicated, as in the case of uncivilized man, by a belief in the mobilization of occult powers. Further on we shall analyse a number of facts which seem to demonstrate in the child—the child of civilized life—the origin of many of the beliefs and practices here studied. Might not also something be said of certain of the sentimental dramas which end in suicide?

are all-powerful? Clearly, anxiety is not a normal state of mind; one tries to escape it, and succeeds only by refusing to think of that mysterious domain: what will be will be. What is the use of torturing oneself beforehand? One resigns oneself without a protest to that which is to happen, which eludes all attempts at foresight, against which nothing can be done. One is like the unresisting leaf which the breeze tosses about at pleasure. There may possibly be a certain sweetness in the *far niente* of a life such as this. But one is defenceless against the passions which may suddenly rise in their fury, destroying everything in their way. From a state of pleasant smiling indolence, the subject, as though suddenly aroused, passes straightway to one of mad excitement, to the exasperation of terror and the unleashing of the most bloodthirsty appetites.

It is noteworthy that universal animism—which, without being magic itself, is a sort of complex substitution for it—keeps alive and continually intensifies fear, at the same time increasing suspicion. It consists in attributing natural phenomena to personal wills—not to a single will but to several, as multiple as is the infinite variety of that which rouses it. Struck by the devastating hurricane, far more than by the beneficent regularity of nature's workings, by the cruelty of famine, by illness, by accidents, by death, far more than by the tranquillity of normal life, the myriads of occult powers that govern the world are suspected by it of being wicked and wishing it ill. They may be appeased, or at all events neutralized. An attempt is made to win their favour by observances which must be kept. No stone must be left unturned to obtain possession of secret charms capable of removing hostile forces, of controlling them and of thwarting their effects.

From fetishists are procured objects on which is conferred the power to protect from disastrous influences and from the accidents which such influences might cause. This magic is essentially a defensive weapon. It is harmful in the sense that, concentrating the whole of a man's confidence upon certain material things, it induces the mind not to seek improvements. Should one or more fetishes be proved inadequate to supply the whole of the protection required, an attempt is made to discover others. These are procured and confidence is reborn. There is no escape from the state of irrational concern by which the intellect is held captive.

Confidence in all these fetishes is great, and yet uncivilized man is ever afraid lest his enemy possess a fetish more powerful than his own. "Whatever price," remarks M. Burnier, "a man may have paid for one of his fetishes, he never knows whether it may not have lost its virtue without its external appearance being in the slightest degree changed. Possibly the spirit or the power that dwelt in the fetish may have disappeared owing to the influence of a stronger fetish or as the result of an accident. For instance, when eating meat out of a pot, if one of those present either deliberately or accidentally puts his foot on his neighbour's, he thereby destroys the power of all the fetishes which the latter had acquired, and the poor fellow now possesses only empty and perfectly useless tokens. Should he know this, he procures others; but such a piece of ill-luck may happen without his knowledge, and the fetishist is ever in terror; first, lest he may not possess a fetish for every possible eventuality; second, lest those he has may, unknown to himself, have lost their efficacy.[1]

[1] Personal correspondence, 22nd January, 1927.

For such a belief to immobilize the intellect is a serious thing enough, but a further complication ensues. While it is possible, to some extent, to turn aside the malevolence of the occult powers, certain people, it is believed, are able to obtain possession and make use of them for evil purposes. Indeed, there is the charm-working "specialist" to whom appeal those who wish to injure an enemy. They ask him for the fetish powerful enough to counteract, even from afar, the other fetishes by which the detested individual believes himself protected. From him they procure the prescription capable of unleashing misfortune.

Charm-working practice bears the most diverse names among different peoples, but its characteristics are everywhere the same. To the people of South West Madagascar, the *Vuriké*, which we shall take as a type of these operations, is everything—spell, enchantment, philtre, ligature, fascination—that has for its object mysteriously to injure some one. At bottom, it implies an effort on the part of one man to attack another without revealing himself. It stands for the realization of enmity and mischief. Governor Julien,[1] who has studied the matter in detail on the spot, has discovered that this charm is supposed to possess efficacy proportionate to the will behind it. Sometimes it occasions an illness which causes the ruin of the most carefully prepared plans. Or it unexpectedly raises an insurmountable obstacle which abruptly terminates some undertaking. To attain these results, which are of infinite variety, the charm, once prepared, must be deposited in the right spot. "The malefic

[1] *Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires*, July 1927. We take this opportunity to mention the series of extremely profound studies which Governor Julien has made on the peoples dwelling in the south-west of the island.

influence will sometimes come from simple ingredients mixed with the food, or simply from contact with a garment, or an intimate object, a utensil which, it is known, must be touched by the person marked down for injury. Certain charms are so subtle that it is sufficient to press them on the mark made by a person's footsteps, or to plunge them rapidly into the spring of water from which he drinks, for him to be henceforth at their mercy. Still more terrible is the *Vuriké* that acts from a distance, by a mere look or a gesture in a given direction.[1] The eye and the finger, by the power of the charm, then act as the lightning flash itself would do. The very name alone, apparently quite commonplace and uttered by chance in some insignificant phrase, provokes the most disastrous results."

The *Vuriké* does not always act with this terrifying rapidity. It is supposed to cause in the victim a sort of decline or consumption accompanied by painful dejection and gradual emaciation, followed—apart from timely intervention—by death. Appeal for such intervention is made to a skilful *ùmbiasa*. One of the most dreaded spells bears the special name of *Raùdià*. It is made out of the dust taken from the impress of some one's steps, or from the spot where this person has sat. "The dust, mixed with certain charms after propitiatory incantations," says M. Julien, "possesses considerable malefic power. There must be pronounced, along with the name of the victim, that of the disease which it is desired to inflict upon him. This is generally a tumour, which rapidly assumes enormous proportions. It begins with the feet, and movement from place to place is impossible."

[1] Many sites reputed either sacred or malefic bear the name of *tsitundrùina*, literally, "what is not shown with the finger" (*tundrù*).

Another spell is the *Tùlaké*. The victim suddenly becomes feeble and faints away, without suspecting the origin of the trouble. This charm is also very rapid in its effects, though easier to resist. In every family there is at least one member who knows what to do to counteract the power of the charm. The victim utters incoherent calls, as though he had suddenly gone mad. If treated at once, the malady is easily cured, but if the slightest delay intervenes, grave complications supervene, followed by death.

According to M. Julien[1] there is not a single malady or epidemic, accident or catastrophe, which is not attributed to some malefic practice. What he found among these people in South West Madagascar, is exactly what is rampant among all uncivilized peoples. Names change but the thing itself is everywhere the same. Whether in Africa, in Oceania, or elsewhere, uncivilized man is haunted by the menaces surrounding him.[2] What terrifies him is that nothing reveals to him what is thus being organized against him, and no one has any reason ever to regard himself as safe. Every man is at all times liable to become the victim of an evil spell which some unknown individual has cast. How can he know whether

[1] In the work to which several allusions have been made, Governor Julien gives a list of the most widely known charms, the pathological disturbances attributed to them, and the magical and other treatments to counteract them. Doctors will have no difficulty in finding in these descriptions diseases of characteristic types which are in no way related to the malefic practices to which they are attributed. "Before judging them," he says, "one must remember that, in our own lands, no very great lapse of time has passed since every evil involved the invocation of some particular saint: quinsy being cured by Saint Martin, insanity and vertigo by Saint Nazarius, dropsy by Saint Quentin, abscesses and scurvy by Saint Eligius and Saint Julian, etc."

[2] See the examples given by M. Lévy-Bruhl, *La Mentalité Primitive*, pp. 51, etc. Cf. also the details given by M. Henri A. Junod on the *bouloyi* of the Ronga: *The Life of a South African Tribe, passim*. Cf. *Bulletin de la Mission suisse romande*, April 1921, p. 104, and the following article by M. Guye.

some mysterious ingredient has not been secretly slipped into his food or onto his clothes? What can be that apparently soothing word uttered with intent to injure him? How is he to defend himself against a look laden with spite and hatred? A man never knows by whom he is threatened or hunted down and spitefully injured. It may be that, at his very side, stands the secret enemy who has won the invisible powers over to his side. One never knows what particular act will betray his hostile intentions, but one trembles, and the slightest accident may let loose the worst suspicions, violent accusations, and implacable ill-will. There is nothing that is natural, that is to say, nothing that is not brought about by calculated and frequently perverse motives. A man is killed in battle, it is believed, only because an evil spell has been cast upon him. The main preoccupation of uncivilized man is to discover what enemy has bewitched him.[1] Should his suspicions find an object—as may readily happen if he has a vivid imagination—immediate and irreparable outbursts of rage and cruelty will follow.

Those who bring to pass the evil deeds suspected are the real sorcerers. It is important to give this word its exact meaning. A sorcerer is not any man who is able to use an occult power; otherwise, the name would have to be given to every individual who has recourse to the traditional technical practices; indeed, there is not one of these which does not claim to add a heterogeneous and complementary force to an object or an act, by means of a rite or ceremony, or by recourse to a gesture, a formula, or an individual. By the performance of magical rites, however, the technician, among the uncivilized, has progressed unwittingly in the direction of a claim that is

[1] See Appendix II.

disastrous both to himself and to others. "As disconcerting techniques," says Father Bouvier, "predispose those who adopt them without adequate intellectual and moral preparation to the unhealthy fever of occult practices, so certain deceptive sciences, governed by erroneous ideas on sympathy, inevitably lead an inferior mentality along lines of divinatory or magical superstitions. By magical rites the savage technician, on reaching the extreme limits of his power, hopes to outstrip them; by divination, by initiation into certain reserved knowledge, the 'philosopher' of rudimentary or decadent societies, dreams of fathoming some of the mysteries that oppress him." This effort may some day end in immoral and anti-social practices. It does not do this all at once, and it would be unjust to see straightway in a magical practice a criminal act of malevolent sorcery.

Uncivilized man does not make this mistake. He does not confuse together the empirical medicine man, whose remedies, even though based on rational observations, are supposed to utilize occult properties, the fetishists from whom lucky charms may be obtained, and the genuine sorcerers. "The first are called by a name which connotes nothing offensive, and which, among the Bantus, means healer or diagnostician. These are spoken of without animosity or disdain; the others are regarded as casters of spells, wizards, night-prowlers, witch doctors."[1] They inspire a sort of holy terror.

Consequently a distinction must carefully be maintained between these two classes of individuals. Unfortunately, this has not been done with sufficient precision in many writings. It must be confessed, however, that a series of imperceptible transitions may lead from one

[1]Bouvier, *Recherches de science religieuse*, sept.-oct. 1912, p. 401.

function to another, from practices which have nothing morally reprehensible in themselves, to others that are really criminal.

There is the *kiàlu*, for instance, which, among the natives of South West Madagascar, indicates a charm that protects against anonymous ravishers, marauders, and malefactors. "The natives," M. Julien tells us, "use it for protecting their crops, their women, and their flocks from robbers, gallants, and highway brigands. *Kiàlus* are utilized for protecting houses and villages; their principal effect is to nullify the virtues that malefactors obtain from the amulets they wear for ensuring the success of their enterprises. According to the nature of their misdeeds, those who expose themselves to the influence of the *kiàlus* are afflicted with evils which denounce them whilst exposing them to the sarcasm and scorn of the masses. For instance, the harvest robbers, after cramming themselves with food protected by a *kiàlu* will have their mouths contracted and twisted, their tongues being no longer able to articulate intelligible words; sometimes a kind of paralysis, either partial or general, will accompany or aggravate these symptoms. In other cases the thief will be unable to stir from the spot, quite incapable of escaping from the scene of his theft. The *kiàlu* is supposed to produce, in certain cases, a kind of abdominal distention which gradually invades the entire body. When the throat becomes affected, the victim dies suffocated, after painful contractions of all his muscles. . . . Certain *kiàlus* cause the loss of all memory for places, so that the thief, unable to find his way back, remains stupefied and allows himself to be taken on the very spot which he is most anxious to leave. Sometimes also the *kiàlu* calls forth an unaccustomed sound, the cry of an

animal or the fall of some heavy body, just at the moment when it is propitious for the owner to intervene. Finally some of them, we are assured, speak and warn the person concerned just as a watchful friend would do."

These means of defence, illusory though they be, are no more criminal than other means used by civilized man in defending his safe or strong box—traps for catching the marauders, warning bells, etc. But when you are in possession of such mysterious means of defending yourself, there is a great temptation to use them as offensive weapons and to direct upon an enemy against whom you have evil intentions cruel maladies which will incapacitate and kill him. "When the *kiàlu* or the *vuriké*," we are informed, "has to act against some definite person, in the course of the incantations there must be uttered several times the name of the victim and the nature of the disease it is desired to inflict upon him." Is it invariably in order to defend oneself against a dreaded attack that this name will be uttered? Why should it never be uttered with a thought of attack? It is this that leads one to misrepresent the influence of the *ùmbiasas*. As a rule, these magicians are expected to make charms and spells for purposes of defence. Their trade has all the characteristics of a sacred office. "The man who fulfills its duties," says M. Julien, "is honoured and respected. In the tribe he has greater moral ascendency than that of the greatest political chiefs. The *ùmpandzàkà*[1] themselves always keep one of them at hand as a confidential adviser. . . . The rôle of these *ùmbiasas* would not be essentially harmful, did not cupidity transform many of them into common spell-casters. In such cases, it is at night that they engage in practices that are as mysterious as they are

[1] Etymologically "he who reigns," sovereign, king, chief.

universally dreaded. They wander about quite naked, and, on approaching the house where the person to be bewitched is sleeping, they engage in a hellish dance, supposed to represent what the natives in their terror call 'the sob of the departed.' . . . By means of a thorn smeared over with some malefic substance, it is possible to throw a spell upon whosoever eats the food offered by the hand in which the thorn is concealed. Thus, the natives claim, numerous deaths and cruel diseases are inflicted upon mankind without it being possible to entertain anything but mere suspicion against their instigators." In all these cases, it is evidently the client who appeals to the *ùmbiasa* to intervene in a way that causes him to depart from his purely protective rôle.

Great importance must be attached to these psychological "slidings" which bring about a transition from the defensive to the offensive. M. Burnier noticed that a native whose field produces little, whereas his neighbour's produces a great deal, hesitates between two methods. "He is a prey to two feelings: jealousy of the man who is more favoured than himself, and the desire to secure a similar advantage. He will therefore try to procure one of the two following medicines, or perhaps both at once: the one intended to make his own field prosper, the other which he will hide in his neighbour's field for the purpose of ruining him.[1] He therefore appeals to the fetishist, not only to compass his own protection but to injure the other person. Magic begins to be no longer an instrument of protection but a weapon of witchcraft. The fetishist is now on the path of what is to be real sorcery.

If, instead of considering the motives of his act, we

[1] Personal correspondence, 22nd January, 1927.

consider the methods to which he has recourse, we are confronted with the same dangerous slope. By virtue of his belief in "occult sympathies," he mixes with his ingredient many substances which he imagines will make them effective. Certain of these substances are simply repulsive or ridiculous. When one contents oneself with borrowing a little human perspiration in the hope of communicating to a child somewhat of the energy of the individual from whom it has been taken, it is not a very serious matter. But when one claims to utilize powder made from carbonized human flesh, then it becomes a matter of discovering the means whereby this substance may be procured. Doubtless it is not rash to suppose that one began by utilizing the corpses of slain foes. And certainly this does not appear to the mass conscience as an action to be condemned.[1] Once, however, the utility of this special powder is admitted and confidence awakened in the virtue of this precious ingredient, what will a man not do to secure for himself the advantage of this weapon? When the thing to be done is to prepare medicine intended for the satisfaction of selfish and even violent passions, how could one help being gradually led to the perpetration of some possibly cruel outrage? The man is on the path that leads him from an attitude of defence to one of aggression. Once on this path, to what stage will he not go? The true sorcerer keeps his mind intent upon the realization of a dream: how is he to obtain the excess of force which nothing natural can procure for him? The same dream besets the individual who comes asking him for the accursed recipes. Both alike urgently crave for this energy. If need be, they will commit crimes in order to obtain it.

[1] See *Psychologie de la Conversion chez les peuples non-civilisés*, vol. i. pp. 235-237.

We are unable to make a choice between horrors ever inspired by the same motive. "One night," says M. Georges Dieterlen, "a man, the worse for drink, is dragged away by friends and led far from the village to a mountainous spot where are seen the huts of boys attending 'initiation' lessons. At once he is surrounded by a band of men who begin chanting the 'mokorotlo,' a war song of the Basutos, while he is seized and firmly held. A medicine man draws near and with his knife puts the drunken man's ankle out of joint, whilst the men sing louder and louder to drown the victim's cries. After this his other leg is smashed with an axe, and the marrow is extracted by breaking the bone upon a stone. The singing becomes louder than ever. Then one eye after another is torn from its socket. Finally, certain pieces of flesh are cut away from the body of the wretched sufferer. After this the finishing blow is dealt, and the mutilated corpse is flung into the bush to be devoured by wild beasts. While all this is taking place, the two sons of the victim, who belong to the school of initiation, hear the cries of their unfortunate father, as do their comrades, and say to one another: 'Is not that our father's voice? Why this murder? Why this cruelty? . . .' In preparing certain potent medicines, the ingredients of which they consist must include fat, flesh, and skin taken from a *living* man or woman. It is quite simple: there *must* be these things, taken, as I have just told you, from a living being. And when the medicine-man needs to provide himself with these powerful medicines, nothing will stop him." [1]

"In a village of the Antsianhaka region, not far from Imerimandroso (Madagascar)," relates M. G. Mondain,

[1] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1926, i. pp. 217-218. Compare another account by the father of this witness, M. H. Dieterlen, in *Psychologie de la Conversion* . . . vol. ii. pp. 473-474.

" lived the keeper of an idol, who had long claimed to possess the power, in return for numerous presents and offerings to his fetish, of preserving the rice plantations from the ravages of hail. Now, as it happens, hail has fallen recently. Anger of the villagers, who had regularly contributed their offerings. A sorcerer, however, is seldom caught napping. 'Yes,' he said, 'you have brought me your tribute, but, long ago, in the times of your ancestors, the idol was accustomed to the sacrifice of the tongue and entrails of a child of ten.' . . . Twenty-seven villagers consult together and begin searching for parents unnatural enough to sell their child; they buy and kill him, tear out his tongue, which they take to the idol, and afterwards scatter the blood and entrails over the surrounding hills. These men have been arrested, and an enquiry is being made. It has not yet, however, been possible to learn the name of the guardian of the idol, as the accused men refuse to denounce him."[1]

" Yesterday I was informed," relates M. S. Galley (Gabun), " that in the forest there is a band of brigands on the look-out to kill women. They are six in number, and have partaken together of medicine prepared by a great sorcerer of Samkita, and intended to aid in the slaughter of many elephants. One form of medicine, however, is not sufficient, there must be others. The best consists in killing women, tearing out their hearts, and taking their skulls; from these ingredients is made a most efficacious drug which, along with gunpowder, is introduced into the barrel of a musket. The elephants will fall dead without any trouble. Our six braves began by killing a woman of the tribe of the Mvémé, then another of the tribe of the Eyefal. A third succeeded in making

[1] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1912, i. pp. 462-463.

her escape. The braves were seen in the village in front of us, and the women trembled, no longer daring to leave their huts to go to the plantations." [1]

Along with all these crimes—of which it would be only too easy to multiply examples—we have witnessed the rise of a new form of magic, which no longer bears any relation to that which might be called protective. This kind of magic, that of the sorcerer, is eminently antisocial, and is dreaded as such. Amongst its ingredients it requires objects or substances which can be procured only by crimes repugnant to the mass conscience. All the same, it is not immoral solely because of the methods to which it has recourse. It is immoral by reason of the passions it endeavours to satisfy, passions that are essentially selfish and personal. No longer is it a matter of defending people against occult influences, or freeing them from diseases and guarding them against accidents, etc., but rather of pursuing the realization of an evil ambition, of securing for oneself a power to which one has no right, of procuring unearned wealth. "Evidently," says Father Trilles, "in ordinary life and by the sheer force of circumstances, the role of fetishist and sorcerer will often be continued in one and the same person. Some particular individual, a religious minister, respected by his family, a fetishist esteemed in public, will also be a sorcerer, though in the utmost secrecy: if his position enables him to maintain this capacity, he will be universally feared and hated, will continue his existence only by terror and murder, and will daily tremble for his very life." [2]

The man who feels himself dreaded like some wild beast experiences a sort of savage pride. He wishes to

[1] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1911, ii. p. 110.

[2] *Semaine d'Ethnologie religieuse*, 2e session, p. 172.

be the one who is feared and suggests to himself the feelings which make of him an outlaw. He feels impelled to do the very opposite of what is generally recognized and practised. What other men regard as obligations, he does not consider as applicable to himself, and he scorns a spirit of conformity which would deprive him of all his originality. What others abjure, however, in obedience to social custom, possesses for him an invincible attraction. He regards himself as superior to all considerations of ordinary morality, as a rebel against religion and its ordinances. The "medicine-man" to whom one has recourse for protection against evil influences is sought in open daylight, with the knowledge of the whole world. The sorcerer however is approached by night, he is consulted when no one is about. No doubt the "medicine-man," even when working in public, conceals the tricks he practises and pronounces in an unintelligible manner the formulas of which he makes use. This, however, is only his way of keeping to himself the secrets in his possession and by which he lives. The reason why the sorcerer takes care not to work in the full light of day is because his deeds of darkness are such as the mass conscience would feel bound to condemn and prevent, for the actions which men living in a state of society are obliged to reprove are those which it pleases him to recommend or to perform. For the success of the practices of ordinary magic—that which we shall usually call white magic—many deeds of purification are frequently enjoined. For the success of the practices of witchcraft, however, that is to say of black magic, it is frequently the very opposite of purification that is required. Whereas continence, for instance, is exacted of the women who have remained behind in the village during

the whole time that the men are hunting or at war, the most disorderly conduct characterizes the ceremonies of sorcery. These are never performed without a morbid feeling that they are prejudicial to the social life of clan or tribe. The scenes that take place in the tropical forests bear a strange resemblance to those which, so we are informed, characterized the witches' Sabbaths during the whole of the Middle Ages. Joy in evil: such is the mental state of the sorcerer. This is why he is the one being who is hated and detested above all others, to meet whom on one's path is hurtful, who must be kept away at all costs and got rid of, if this can be effected without danger.

In certain districts—on the banks of the Zambezi, for instance—the natives endure all the terrors of anxiety at the thought of the evil which he may inflict upon them. The individual suspected is constantly aware of the presence of the dreaded sorcerer, even though he may be perfectly innocent. Many people are accused of sorcery who know nothing at all about it. How could this fear fail to proclaim to us the evil desire in those whom it torments, which only witchcraft can satisfy? When one has such a dread of spells, is not one tempted to have recourse to those capable of casting them? The fear of sorcerers does not always mean that sorcerers exist. Still, it indicates the presence of those passions which call sorcery into existence.

While sorcery is not everywhere a reality, it is not to be wondered at that it assumes grave and even sinister proportions among certain tribes. In southern Africa it is the Kaffirs, and more especially the Zulus, who practise sorcery and often terrify the rest of the Bantus. In the Congo region, the sorcerers form regular secret societies which merit close study. The sorcerer is what he is only

after a prolonged initiation begun in childhood and carried on for years. From some individual reputed to be a simple fetishist he learns the virtues of plants, remedies, poisons, a host of secret rudiments, and is himself regarded as a fetishist pupil. In due course he is received as a member of a secret brotherhood. He is not at first acquainted with its members, who appear masked at all their meetings. He takes the dual oath that he will, blindly and under penalty of death, obey the spirit who, through the medium of the head men, commands the society, and that he will never reveal, also under penalty of death, the secrets of the society, the pass words, the names of his fellow-members when he learns who they are, especially of the headmen. We are indebted to Father Trilles for a thorough study of this initiation, all the details of which he has reconstructed, giving a long description of the successive tests. It may be asserted that these tests cover every possible degree of perversity.

To become a member of the brotherhood, the candidate must have committed a crime. This implies that he has given proof of his courage, and that against a village hostile to his own. Then a second task is given him, once again a murder; but this time the victim is not a stranger or a mere anybody, but is chosen from amongst his nearest relatives, his mother or his eldest daughter. It is a veritable human sacrifice that he is called upon to make before a frenzied crowd, above the severed trunk of a euphorbia, a shrub from which flows a viscous narcotic sap. "When arteries and veins are emptied and the victim has ceased her final convulsions, the sap and the blood are mingled together; the neophyte is the first to drink, then follow the others in turn until the cup is quite empty. The bloodless body of the victim is then

set on a funeral pile, slightly roasted, and divided into as many pieces as there are persons present, generally twelve. The flesh is immediately devoured, but the bones are carefully set apart. These are again placed on the pile until they are almost carbonized, when they are again withdrawn and divided into twelve portions. The traces of the hideous feast are carefully effaced and all return to the village. The victim's bones, pulverized, will be used as ingredients for compounding potent charms."[1]

The tests that follow are essentially tests of courage and endurance. The last surpasses all in horror. The aspirant leads forward a human victim, generally a woman, though frequently a captive or a stolen child. The victim must be suffocated, not bled to death. "No sooner has death supervened than victim and sorcerer are closely bound to each other, breast to breast, head to head, and mouth to mouth; meanwhile a pit at least three metres deep has been dug. Into it the two bodies are carefully let down, the sorcerer being underneath. The head-man makes sure that the bodies are quite firm, and the pit is covered over with boughs, above which is erected a hut of a special type.

For three whole days the neophyte will remain in this position, the silence all around being absolute: at each forest path leading to the glade are posted men who mount guard and prevent all access to him. Sometimes, I have been told, the neophyte cannot endure the test and is driven insane. A missionary friend of mine, attracted by the demented cries of one of these wretches, one day broke through; he uncovered the pit and witnessed this horrible spectacle. When the three days have elapsed, the neophyte is solemnly removed from the pit and taken

[1] *Semaine d'Ethnologie religieuse*, 2nd session, p. 179.

back to his hut, still bound to the corpse. In this position he will remain for an additional three days. During this time, he is at liberty to eat and drink at pleasure, though, in taking up food and drink, he must use, not his own hands, but the unbound right hand of the corpse. A friend will place each morsel into this hand, and the food will in this way be inserted into the mouth.

On the sixth day the odour, as may be imagined, has become intolerable, but the test is at an end. The patient is released and washed with lustral water; his whole body is painted with oil (*baza*) and red powder, and he performs a sacred dance in the centre of the glade. Then the corpse is brought to him. With the knife of initiation he cuts the wrist, and taking the hand of the corpse, performs a new dance. This hand is then put out to dry: he will use it in future for certain magical operations. It will be a potent fetish."[1]

We will give no further odious details of this initiation. The investigation of Father Trilles received tragic confirmation during the eight months following December 1917, in the affair before the court of the Bas-Cavally (French West Africa). The document before my eyes[2] is the official story of the crime which was committed and of the investigation to which it gave rise; it also contains the authentic report of the cross-examination. It concerned the murder perpetrated by the Wihibis, a secret society of sorcerers operating in the Pié tribe, a subdivision of San-Pedro. According to M. Prouteaux, the administrator of the district, a dozen societies of the same kind exist in the district, committing similar crimes.

[1] *Semaine d'Ethnologie religieuse*, 2nd session, pp. 183-184. Cf. *Psychologie de la conversion* . . . vol. i. p. 229.

[2] I received this document from M. Jean Brunhes, who kindly authorizes me to make use of it.

This official arrived at the conclusions we have already advanced, as regards what constitutes the sorcerer's dramatic originality. "I contrast," he says, "the sorcerer who secretly practises evil with the fetishist (the *Deye*) who is a real shaman, and whose magical science must be employed only to protect men from the doings of spirits, and also to warn them of the wrath of some particular deity, which they are able to distinguish by innumerable signs. The *Deye* is a distributor of talismans and an organizer of expiatory or propitiatory sacrifices. The *Wihibi* is an adept of black magic."

There are distinct ranks in the *Wihibi* societies. The neophyte remains several years as a "messenger," and passes through three grades before taking rank among the "Yéou" (elders) from whom the head-men are chosen. Promotion appears to take place by seniority, each man advancing a stage whenever his predecessor either passes to a higher class or dies. It also seems clear that one condition of advancement is the obligation on the part of the candidate to supply a human victim. Each society assembles once a month, on the night of the full moon, and these meetings are veritable witches' sabbaths. Preparation for them is doubtless made by partaking of substances which cause genuine hallucination.[1] Scenes of sadic orgy are the common practice. It is at these monthly meetings that they generally confer about the next victim. "He whose turn has come is invited to point out the man—or woman—whom he wishes to kill, and if he appears to be forgetting his promises, when the

[1] "The place where the sorcerers meet," I have been informed, "is anywhere in the bush; an uninitiated person sees nothing special about the spot. But the sorcerers pour into their own eyes a liquid which enables them to see what ordinary men do not perceive; then, the bush becomes a beautiful place, on one side of which are the great geniuses who preside over the ceremonies." (Report of M. Prouteaux, p. 4.)

time comes to act, he is publicly called upon to explain himself. The choice of the victim is not left to chance. The *Wihibi* can give only one of his near relatives, such as his father, brother, wife, or son. When, therefore, a crime has been committed by sorcerers, the culprit must always be sought in the immediate circle of the victim. Thus, previous to our arrival, when a death was imputed to the *Wihibis*, all the near relatives of the dead man were at once subjected to a strict ordeal. And so, possibly along with a few innocent persons, the guilty were sure of being taken. The way in which the victim was killed was seldom by cutting the throat. As a rule, the more stealthy and less risky method of poisoning was preferred. In this way, the victim died amongst his own people, and only after the funeral did the *Wihibis* take possession of the body and proceed to share out the flesh to those present. It seems to me probable that a part at least of the skeleton was used in the performance of secret agrarian rites. Perhaps occasionally the flesh cooked on the spot was eaten in common, but as a rule each man carried off his own piece and dried it, intending to use it as opportunity offered. Indeed, it is from human flesh that the most violent poisons and charms are concocted. Not all the *Wihibis* are able to make them. Only a few old magicians know the secret, but when one approaches these terrible and learned sorcerers, the first question the latter ask is: 'Have you any human flesh?' I ought to say, indeed, that when one inquires about magic or crime in the Bas-Cavally one continually hears mention of human flesh, of suppurating dead bodies, etc. The violation of tombs and the mutilation of the dead are fairly frequent, quite apart from the misdeeds that may be attributed to the societies of sorcerers."

The case which called forth the investigation of M. Prouteaux is quite an ordinary one. When sowing the seed in 1917, the Moublo, Oiro, Ibeyou group, was expected to supply a man, and Moublo, in the course of the previous year, had publicly designated Salé. He was not very eager to keep his promise, and the other two of the group, in March 1917, were displeased to find that Salé's state of health remained quite good. At several meetings they reproached Moublo for having broken his word, and, in view of his repugnance, insisted that the victim should be handed over to them alive. A favourable opportunity offering itself, the three accomplices set upon Salé, reduced him to a state of impotence, in all probability by giving him palm wine that had been drugged, and carried him away, in an improvised hammock, to the bush, where they concealed him. There they kept him for twelve days, though not without organizing a plot to explain his disappearance.

" Bala, Salé's wife, herself a sorceress and aware of the course of events, on the evening of the 19th of April and the whole of the following day, pretended not to be uneasy at her husband's prolonged absence. Even on the 21st she went to Rock Béréby, to a sister of Salé's, whom she ingenuously asked if her husband was still at her house. On receiving the reply that Salé had left in a canoe on the 19th, she began the moanings and wailings that are usual at times of mourning, and returned weeping to Ouro. . . . She spread abroad the news of Salé's disappearance. The whole family, headed by his ravishers, then performed all the prescribed rites. After a few enquiries along the beach, which led to nothing more than the discovery of the absent man's canoe, they carried out the funeral in the modified fashion habitual in such

cases. In conformity with custom, Moublo, head of Salé's family, went and gave a glass to Toub Yé, head of the family of Salé's mother, asking 'pardon' of him for the accidental loss of Salé. Then, all due formalities having been respected, the uninitiated returned home, fully persuaded that Salé had drowned himself, while the initiated busied themselves with killing him.

"Meanwhile, Salé had remained hidden in the bush, watched over and fed by the accomplices as well as by his sister, Gui Diéké. There appear to have been discussions, right to the end, as to whether or not they should cut their victim's throat. A numerous party was alarmed at the possible dangers in case the affair should become generally known, but the party that advocated violence proved the stronger. The most eager seem to have been Niaoué, one of the head-men of the society, and Ibeyou, Salé's own brother. Finally death was decided upon, and when all were assembled in a ring, on the ground or on chairs, according to rank, Niaoué told Ba and Nonin to go and fetch the victim, lying hid some distance away in the undergrowth. According to the confessions of the principal culprits, Salé, under the influence of a drug, could neither speak nor act, though he understood what was being said and obeyed orders as though he were an automaton. On reaching the centre of the circle, he was completely stripped, according to custom, and several of those present spoke. Moublo, who had given him, brought against him charges that were not indeed very grave, though it appears to be part of the ceremonial that the one who supplies the victim should give a public explanation of his choice. Then a woman, Touédé Dagoua, accompanying her song with the rattling of a calabash, extolled the courage of Moublo. Finally, Niaoué told

the appointed sacrificer, Yé Tabié, to carry out his task; and Salé, stretched on the ground, with his neck over a hole made for the purpose of receiving the blood, was slaughtered like a sheep. His body was then cut up into pieces which were divided amongst those present, at least amongst those who had already given some one to the society."

It may now be understood, without the necessity of entering into further details, why sorcery is a cause of fearful terror wherever it is practised. The administrator of the Bas-Cavally, in the report we have just given, asserts that "many young men exiled themselves, in preceding years, in order to escape." Whether alone or bound to others by crimes committed in common, the negro sorcerer is an object of dread to all around. He lives an outlaw, without either clan or tribe. Doubtless the beliefs embodied in witchcraft are always more or less widespread; they are profuse and active within well defined limits.

As Durkheim very justly remarks however, their effect is not to link together the men who uphold these beliefs and to unite them in one and the same group, living the same life. . . . Between the magician (sorcerer) and the individuals who consult him, as between the individuals themselves, there is no enduring tie that constitutes them members of one and the same moral body comparable with that formed by the worshippers of one God, followers of the same creed. The magician has a clientèle . . . And his clients may very well have no connection with one another, may even not know each other; the relations they hold with him are mostly accidental and temporary. . . . True, in certain cases magicians (sorcerers) form societies amongst themselves. . . . But it

will at once be remarked that these associations are by no means indispensable to the functioning of magic (sorcery). They are even rare, and somewhat exceptional. For the practice of his art, the magician is not under the necessity of uniting with his confrères. He is inclined to be a solitary individual; as a rule, he avoids society rather than seeks it. Hubert and Mauss emphasize the fact that, even in his dealings with his colleagues, this man always retains a certain aloofness.[1]

The sorcerer may well tremble for his life. He is aware that the most violent hatred is brewing around him. If it dare not show itself, it is from dread of his vengeance. But when men's minds become liberated, however slightly, from this fear, anger wins the day, and a raging mob rushes upon the man before whom they once trembled. Coillard has told us of frightful scenes which he constantly witnessed during the early years of his stay on the banks of the Zambezi.[2]

These explosions of rage are the natural reaction from fear. Fear does not reason, it criticizes nothing, it provokes the direst actions; by a contagion that is irresistible it instantly rouses crowds to a fury which nothing can quell. "Our station," writes M. S. Galley, a missionary at Ovan (Ogooué), "was disturbed by loud cries; an enraged populace from the villages was pursuing a poor stranger, about forty years of age, shouting: *Mimbeng, mimbeng!* This is an allusion to a secret band of assassins who conceal themselves in the forest and surprise lonely persons, in order to get possession of their skulls to make fetishes of them. The man thus accused

[1] *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, pp. 61-62. Hubert and Mauss, *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie*, p. 18.

[2] Cf. *Psychologie de la conversion*, vol. ii. p. 269.

attempted to escape, but he was quickly caught and ill-treated by the crowd. I attempted to intervene and to rescue him. I questioned him, though but to slight avail, for he was terribly afraid. About an hour afterwards he was pursued anew, and, to be rid of him, they made him cross the river. No sooner, however, had he landed on the other side, almost stunned by the blows he had received, than the natives on the opposite bank of the stream came up, shouting and evidently inclined to ill-treat him also. Then I asked that he should be brought back to me. I had him washed by the river side, for he was bespattered with earth, and I took him home, protecting him in the kitchen. Even here I still had to drive away the people, who came threatening him. I believe that this man is an epileptic, his left hand is half burnt away through falling into the fire, and his mind is slightly deranged. Had we not been there to defend him, I believe that the people who were driving him from village to village would have killed him before sunset. It is unnecessary to state that the man was not a member of a band of assassins. These brigands do not show themselves thus in open daylight, and no one could tell me of a single crime committed by him in this region."[1] The insensate fury against this poor "innocent" strikingly indicates in what a nightmare atmosphere live all these men, haunted as they are by their dread of the sorcerer.

We will here bring our investigation to an end. It would be possible, and even an easy matter, to extend it into many other domains. The contrasting of magic and religion would bring before us very grave and delicate problems. What relation have these two human phenomena to each other? Have they a common origin?

[1] *Journal des missions évangéliques*, 1924, i. pp. 190-191.

Which of the two seems to be the more primitive? Do they act upon each other? Has this mutual action, if it exists, any consequences, and, if so, what are they? Such questions as these could be answered only after patient and prolonged investigation. Here we have simply confined ourselves to an acquaintance with facts and with the moral phenomena dependent upon them. The conclusions reached appear to be fairly definite. We have the impression of being confronted with a human mentality separated by a gulf from our own. The belief in magic on which this mentality is based, creates an incapacity, which we find disconcerting, for personal reflection and energy, makes of it, so to speak, a realm governed by the illogical, fosters every kind of emotional outburst, suppresses self-control, engenders morbid fears and murderous frenzies: in a word, produces and maintains a veritable intellectual and moral disintegration. It subsequently forms the greatest of all obstacles to any civilizing agency, an obstacle that certain observers declare to be really insurmountable. What are we to think of such a theory? Are we really and inevitably led to assert that there are two humanities or, in other words, that between uncivilized man and ourselves the difference is irreducible.

CHAPTER IV

MAGIC IN THE HIGHER SOCIETIES

IN order to assert that there are two different humanities, each of which is irreducible to the other, it would be necessary that nothing could ever be pointed to in ourselves resembling that which characterizes uncivilized man. Now, does not that very thing which constitutes the substratum of this mentality sometimes manifest itself with amazing preciseness in those around us, assuming stupendous proportions? Moralists of all ages are in the habit of saying: "Scratch the civilized man and you will find the savage." Often, too, when studying country folk-lore, there have been discovered many traits identical with those observed in so-called primitives.

If we would depart from generalities, we soon perceive that the problem is a somewhat delicate one. In the first place, it is not always convenient to verify the authenticity of the facts invoked.[1] Then again, when these facts are

[1] I have met with numerous legends, more than questionable, sometimes quoted in order to prove the survival of totemistic superstitions. Here are two examples. In a very serious review, which, in order to avoid causing annoyance to anyone, I shall not name, I read the following: "When in the sixteenth century certain Bernese plotted against Geneva, they procured a bear, intending, if they succeeded in their undertaking, to bring it to Geneva, at the same time replacing the armorial bearings of that town by those of Berne." The author of this story compared with it the tale of Prince Louis Napoléon who, on landing at Boulogne for his somewhat masquerade-like frolic, had provided himself, it is said, with a live eagle which he caused to flutter about over his head. I had the curiosity to enquire into these two incidents, and the following is what I learned: "In 1536," I was informed by a historian well acquainted with the annals of Geneva, "the Bernese declared war upon the Duke of Savoy, a proceeding at that time favourable to Geneva. After having driven the Duke out of Geneva, they claimed over that town episcopal rights, and the

really authentic, it is often no easy matter to be certain of their exact meaning. They may be nothing more than gestures, corresponding to no belief; they may even be inspired at times by feelings or ideas that have nothing in common with those which, in other times and places, have created and kept alive the same practices. Another danger consists in the fact that though we are struck by the very real difference between the ordinary mental cast of mind of those with whom we live and the mental habits of the far-away peoples with whom we compare them, we are in danger of completely failing to discern that which is similar and even identical in both alike. Let us carefully guard against the temptation, whether of far-fetched assimilation or of wholesale differentiation. Each of these dangers exists, and we must avoid them both.

I

We will now return to a consideration of the principal elements of the belief in magic, as found among the un-

people of Geneva successfully opposed these claims. The Bernese army withdrew, and the only result of this war against the Duke of Savoy, this liberation of Geneva by Berne, was *a song of the bear*, which was very friendly to Geneva." Regarding the story of the Boulogne eagle, the following is what really took place. The small band of Prince Louis Bonaparte carried about with them a large eagle, of gilded wood. This symbolic object gave rise to a legend which gradually took shape in a somewhat curious way. The wooden eagle became by degrees a live eagle purchased on the quay previous to the departure for France. Then, they would have it that this eagle fluttered above the head of the Prince, who held it tied by a string. But this story was not yet sufficiently involved: it was claimed that the Prince, instead of holding the eagle with a string, had placed in his hat some fresh meat, so that the eagle, attracted by the smell, might not fly away. Of this incident there is no trace, either in the account of the trial or in the address to the court. Nevertheless, the government of Louis Philippe would not have failed to insist on anything calculated to throw ridicule on the claimant. It is simply that the caricaturists gradually invented and fixed the various details of the legend. Many people, unconnected with one another, repeated to me the story of the fresh meat hidden in the Prince's hat.

With such examples in mind, how can one help distrusting the stories of the same kind that go about?

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civilized. What we at once find in this picturesque—and occasionally comic though more often distressing—review, is the unlikely collection of objects that are possessed of secret virtues. Whether they be called amulets or talismans, charms or fetishes, how can one help being struck by the sort of passionate eagerness with which they are sought by so many collectors? They are in no way embarrassed by this display of their superstitions, or, if they are, they allow to the faith which they dare not confess—and often conceal but imperfectly—the revenge of a redoubled fervour. These objects are as varied as possible: anything may be raised to this strange dignity. Nevertheless there are some that are particularly prized.

From prehistoric ages down to the present, amber has been in special favour. In neolithic times its magical virtue was already in high honour; perhaps even earlier, though proof of this is still lacking. Pliny mentions grains of amber as being perfect talismans. They seem to have been used chiefly in order to protect children, more especially to guard them from the pains of teething. This belief would appear to have continued to the present time throughout the whole of Europe. We must not, however, imagine that it exists wherever the practice is still in force. In certain quarters, it has become wholly transformed. There the habit of young children wearing amber necklaces is explained by declaring that this is done simply to prevent the rolls of fat on babies' necks from forming painful cuts. It would be absurd to attribute the old superstition to many present-day mothers who adorn their children's necks in this fashion. And yet, this new interpretation of the use to which the amber necklace is put does not seem to date from really ancient times, nor to be very widespread. Besides, it is not very easy to see

why the service expected from these necklaces—one that might be rendered by necklaces of another material—should have been restricted to amber. In reality, we see in it a modification of a very old belief. The virtue of amber appears, in prehistoric times, to have been shared by coral, which is nowadays regarded by the Neapolitans —and perhaps they are not alone in their belief—as a marvellous preservative from the evil eye.

In many circles gold is regarded as having most efficacious protective virtues. Its economic power has become transmuted into something marvellous. What is obtained with it is often so precious that the possibilities of its power appear infinite. To wear beneath one's shirt a gold coin was looked upon by many soldiers in the Great War as an excellent safeguard against bullets, which were miraculously averted by the influence of the metal. Other effects were attributed to gold. A poor Breton, who was without any, explained to his comrades on the battle-field a belief which he got from his mother : that gold objects had the power to prevent putrefaction, and that, owing to this property, the corpses of soldiers so favoured would, at the conclusion of hostilities, still be recognizable and be transported to the cemetery of their native village. Guillaume Apollinaire, who had the curiosity to investigate the superstitions referring to gold on the battle-field, collected the most extraordinary details. He heard it seriously stated that a sergeant who possessed a twenty-franc gold piece was able, by flashing it in the sun, to exercise such power over the enemy that he compelled a score of them to follow him into his trench, where they were easily taken prisoners. A soldier from the Lyons district, while explaining that he believed in his star, added that every man has his own and can be brought

into relation with it only by means of minted gold. He moreover had his own star and gold coin, and was quite at ease regarding his own fate.[1]

Iron also possesses a protective power, to which many people do not hesitate to have recourse when they meet with an individual whose holy character perturbs them. Doubtless, men affect to speak of these things in jesting tones. Still the very man who would not fail to smile, when advising another in certain circumstances to touch iron, would be greatly worried if he could not, unperceived, do this himself and thus secure the contact that guards from all evil.

We know a governess, born in the Grand Duchy of Baden, who, having usually to take the children for a walk in a district where she often met religious students going to their classes or for a constitutional, would never pass them without strongly enjoining upon her charges to touch the key which she offered them, or else the small metal hoops surrounding the grass plots of a public square. And among those who affect to ridicule this young lady, how many are there who, without admitting it, do not act in the same way ? . . .

It is very likely that confidence in this contact dates back to an immensely distant age when, metal instruments being few and novel, the very material of which they were made inspired almost mystical confidence. And this confidence has been so long continued that people still place themselves under the protection of what had for our ancestors an importance which we can readily understand. Metal tools and weapons had such an immediate superiority over tools and weapons made of stone, that this superiority was unhesitatingly attributed to some

[1] *Mercure de France*, 16th November, 1917, pp. 653-654.

occult virtue; and it is to this supposed virtue that one still has recourse in touching iron when in serious difficulty. We must also reflect on the part played, ever since they were discovered, by certain iron objects, which even in these days appear to be invested with a special worth and undoubted efficacy. The nail, from the day it was first invented, has played a very important rôle. This object is supposed to be endowed with immense power. Its power is even doubled if it has been found, we say, by chance, but the believer will say, as the effect of a mysterious will, or if it has been stolen, and the person from whom it has been taken has not had time to deprive it of its secret virtues. It is more efficacious still if it has been wrenched from an object that already of itself possessed magic powers in which the nail participated. When torn from a tomb and set up at the entrance of a house, it is excellent against nightmares; when taken from a cross it carries with it the occult virtue of this sacred object, and is then capable of driving away fever.

Between the years 1914 and 1918, England became a veritable factory for objects made of bent nails: objects that were in great demand by the British soldiers.[1]

We cannot wonder at the rôle played by consecrated medals during the War, both in the case of soldiers who procured them for themselves, and of those pious individuals who endeavoured to distribute them to sick and wounded soldiers in hospitals or to their army godsons.

[1] The horse shoe is supposed to be endowed with marvellous properties; its popularity was intensified more than ever during the war, and before that time was very widespread. To convince oneself of this popularity, one need only glance at any book on folk-lore: "A horse-shoe, or even a part of one, is supposed to bring good luck and success to the plans of its possessor. It must be found by accident, and, if its efficacy is to be retained, its owner must not know to what animal it belonged. This talisman must be kept in the house. Certain persons even go so far as to place it under their pillow." (Fraysse, *Le Folklore du Beaugeois*, 1906, p. 167.)

Such a rôle is utterly opposed to the authentic doctrine of the Church, which regards a medal, whether consecrated or not, as just an emblem intended to remind the one who wears it of his faith and his religious duties. That which transforms it into a talisman or charm is officially declared to be superstition. Such a condemnation is no hindrance to many, and we may suspect that the well-meaning individuals who were most assiduous in promoting the distribution of these religious emblems fell into the prohibited error. The confidence placed in scapularies and the folk tales whereby this confidence has been—or still is—often kept alive, are less in conformity with the teachings of the Church than with traditions that are frankly pagan.

During the War, how many airmen in both camps would have refused to fly had they not been able to take with them their amulet or mascot ?[1]

Must any attention be paid to all those bazaar toys which, in the midst of such tragic circumstances, were distributed in all quarters under the form of amulets ? It is worthy of note that fashion has always played an important rôle in the manufacture of these articles. "No sooner was one kind going out of fashion," says M. Albert Dauzat, "than some manufacturer started another." In the plant kingdom, the edelweiss formerly owed its success to the patronage of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, as well as to the ease with which it could be kept

[1] Cf. *Chronique médicale*, 1st December, 1917, quoted by Albert Dauzat in *Légendes, prophéties et superstitions de guerre*, p. 246. It is not in war time alone that the talisman plays its part. M. A. Dauzat guarantees the authenticity of the following anecdote : "The former Minister of Justice, Senator V. . . . . always carried on his person a perforated *sou* to which he attached the greatest importance. One day, on reaching the Palais-Bourbon, he discovered that, when changing his coat, he had forgotten his precious amulet, whereupon he straightway jumped into another carriage and went back for it." (*Op. cit.* p. 240.)

alive; the four-leaved clover, too, is often faked by ingenious dealers. The May-day lily-of-the-valley is an old tradition. Small dealers do a brisk sale of box, a protection against lightning, for Palm Sunday, and of mistletoe for Christmas. A few years ago, when it was desired to sell in the Paris markets the sweet-scented cyclamen (which blooms in August), care was taken to label it a "lucky charm" as it was wheeled about in hand-barrows.[1]

Here we have one of those instances where a detail may lead one astray.

That fashion in such a case has great influence is unquestionable; that there exist very sceptical manufacturers who make and sell lucky charms without believing in them, is almost certain. They are like those Jewish manufacturers who make ciboria and communion cups.[2] But would these ingenious manufacturers have taken so much trouble had they not been aware of the existence of a body of clients who were attracted less by the material or artistic value of their goods than by the mendacious labels they bear? Why was it necessary to call cyclamen a bringer of good luck when offering it for sale? Is it a tendency underlying superstition that makes some particular talisman a favourite? Is it the production of this talisman that arouses and keeps alive this tendency? Assuredly these phenomena act and re-act upon each other. It is also certain that the trade is very abundant. "Before the War," writes M. Lenôtre,[3] "there was the little elephant charm recommended by Madame de

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 247.

[2] The missionary Nouvelon (Douala, Cameroon) tells me: "As I have to receive the mail, I frequently destroy prospectuses from Europe that are addressed to the natives, offering them fetishes of artificial gold: Fatima hands, little pigs, tiny elephants, minature idols or Buddhas." (Private conversation, Oct. 1926.)

[3] *Le Temps*, 17th February, 1918.

Thèbes, the tiny pig worn as a pin, the lady-bird imprisoned under the glass of a locket, the Fatima hand, the agate, the sardonyx, the onyx, fragments of meteorites—excellent things, these fragments, provided they be genuine! The mere enumeration of these talismans at present in vogue fills the pages of a large catalogue, and the business is a thriving one, not only in France, but even more so perhaps abroad."[1]

There exist precious stones which at all ages have been supposed to possess very precise and efficacious properties. Each stone has its own peculiar worth. It is curious to note how the definite virtue attributed to them becomes modified, without faith in their secret power being diminished. Down to a fairly recent date, the opal, for instance, had the unpleasant reputation of drawing down upon him or her who wore it all sorts of deadly risks. In places where they seriously quote instances in support of every kind of superstition, mention is glibly made of an unlucky ring, given by the Comtesse de Castiglione to Queen Mercédès on the occasion of her marriage to Alphonse XII.—a ring which is said to have speedily brought about the death of all its possessors down to the day when Queen Christine hung it round the neck of the virgin of Almeneda. The Mahomedans from India, however, who came in 1914 to fight on the French front, brought with them the conviction that the opal possesses preservative powers. The new faith spread, and the opal has now regained its former status.[2]

[1] Father Roure collected some of the labels fixed to the trinkets in the jewellery shops at the Palais-Royal: *To avert bad luck, one must have an elephant.* Mme. de Thèbes, April 1912. *Stones from the sky taken from the meteorite that fell to earth in the State of Arizona.* The Thau, *a charm devised over 3000 years ago by the Chaldean magi, in accordance with the constellations: it ensures happiness and good luck to the wearer.* (*Au pays de l'Occultisme*, p. 318.)

[2] Dauzat, *op. cit.* pp. 248-249, according to the *Mercure de France*, 16th July, 1918.

We see what importance is attached, by those who make talismans, to the material which they use. We have seen a like concern amongst the uncivilized. It is for this reason that fetishists, and especially sorcerers, take such trouble to obtain those portions of the human body which are supposed to be endowed with special virtues. We have given instances of the crimes to which this concern may lead. May we not compare with such facts as these, the stealing of relics in churches? Why, in the month of July, 1923, did burglars try to obtain possession of the bones of Saint Martin in the church of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris? Was it not chiefly a question of using them for the manufacture of fetishes or talismans? Moreover, almost as much importance is attached to the way in which objects are procured as to the material of which they are made. In the Personal column of the *Times* the following strange request once appeared: A soldier, having lost his mascot, begged some one of the readers of the journal kindly to afford him an opportunity of replacing it, but he explained that he asked for this as a gift; there being a risk that a mascot which had been paid for might bring him evil, not good, fortune.[1]

II

The amulets most in use are not always made of inanimate material. For some of them, objects are sought which have actually been alive. They have been cut away and removed, not from a dead body but a living one, and it is imagined that these fragments carry away with them the essential properties that were supposed to belong to the animate body.

[1] Quoted by Father Roure, *op. cit.* pp. 321-322.

There is one poor animal which, in many French provinces—and probably in other lands, though we have not the time needed to investigate the matter thoroughly—is in great demand by reason of the healing properties with which it is endowed; and faith in this animal, the mole, causes it to be subjected to the most cruel mutilation. It is supposed successfully to counteract innumerable disorders, and to transfer its power to the person who mutilates it. In the district around Liège, the animal must be empaled on to the end of the first finger, and there left to die. For a whole year the death-dealing finger will retain the power to cure toothache by touch alone. According to certain individuals, it must be caught alive on Good Friday, and the thumb and first finger must be stained with its blood.[1]

[1] Sébillot, *Le Folklore de la France*, t. iii. p. 48. I wondered why the mole is accorded the painful privilege of being thus chosen for mutilations supposed to be beneficial. Now, in the course of conversations with M. Henri A. Junod, of the Portuguese Littoral, and M. Th. Burnier of the land of the Barotsi (Zambezi), I have discovered that there exists in Southern Africa an animal similar to the mole and treated in exactly the same way. This animal burrows underground, but in such a way that it slightly raises the soil and it is possible easily to follow its track. By virtue of the law of similarity, it is identified as the cause of certain affections that manifest themselves by a swelling of the skin. Children, it appears, are frequently attacked by a parasite, a kind of long slender worm that lodges beneath the epidermis and the meanderings of which can clearly be distinguished under the skin. "It causes them very painful itchings on arms and legs; to protect their babies, mothers have found nothing more efficacious than a bracelet made of skin taken from the animal that moves close to the earth, as does this worm close to the skin. Moreover, they also have recourse to this amulet when the poor little ones are actually suffering from the effects of this frightful parasite."—(*Les ba-Ronga*, p. 473.) It is also employed, we are told, to combat the pains of teething in children. Here, too, they compare the sort of protuberance produced by the underground burrowing of this animal and the swelling of the gums that precedes the appearance of a tooth. Finally, witnesses agree in saying that the mysterious ways of the mole are enough to attract to it the fearsome apprehensions of the natives. It is quite certain that those who nowadays make talismans out of moles' claws are unaware why they do this: they formulate no hypothesis, even pseudo-scientific, as to the properties of this animal. They act as they do because others for centuries past have acted in like fashion. But is it not interesting to find in uncivilized people the mental mechanism which is perhaps the origin of a cruel—and nowadays not understood—practice?

In the department of the Seine, at Orly, near Choisy-le-Roi, amulets intended to preserve children from convulsions and to mitigate the pains of teething are made from three paws of a mole or from a viper's head enclosed in a small bag, sewn up and suspended from the child's neck by a piece of string. Care must be taken that the mole's paws have been cut from a living male animal, and that the two fore paws and one of the hind paws are taken.[1] "Last summer, in the Côtes-du-Nord," writes a correspondent in the *Revue des Traditions populaires*,[2] "some one brought us a small bag of coarse cloth containing two paws of a mole. He claimed that this amulet, if worn suspended at the neck, is wonderfully efficacious against fevers of every kind. But they must not be any chance paws that the bag contains. There must be one fore and one hind paw, and they must not have been cut from the same side."

In the Vendéan Bocage, in order to help the growth and cutting of teeth, children are made to wear an amulet consisting of a small white or grey flannel bag, almost square or nearly rectangular. Inside the bag are placed the four paws of a male mole if the bag is intended for a little boy; if for a little girl the four paws of a female mole are inserted. They are warned never to open the amulet under any pretext.[3] Lastly, for we must limit ourselves, in the Beaugeois (Maine-et-Loire), to cure convulsions in children, they need only wear a necklace of wolves' teeth, or else a bag containing four paws cut from a living male mole. To cure toothache in the case of very

[1] *Revue des Traditions populaires*, vol. iv. 1889, p. 576.

[2] Vol. v. 1890, pp. 153-154.

[3] Dr. Boismoreau, *Coutumes médicales et superstitions populaires du Bocage vendéen*, Paris, 1911, p. 71.

young children, the paws of a living male mole must be cut off and placed on the head of the little sufferer.[1]

In these latter cases there may be a trace of the belief according to which a malady may be transferred from the sufferer who wishes to rid himself of it to some material object. This idea, which goes back to the most ancient times, is far from having disappeared. In the forest of Andaine (Basse-Normandie) here and there one finds the forks of trees containing flat stones placed one upon the other. Persons in pain must arrange these stones to the exact height of the seat of the suffering, meanwhile repeating a *Pater* or an *Ave* as each stone is placed in position. Then the pain leaves them and passes into the stones, but it will enter into any one who displaces them.[2]

In the Morvan a live toad, enclosed in a bag, is placed on the head of any one attacked with meningitis. Everyone is convinced that the toad will have the pain transferred to itself.[3]

In Poitou, one places in a small pouch as many pebbles as one has warts, and lays the pouch on the highway. He who picks it up will catch the warts.[4] This method of shaking off a malady is used in other provinces. Two years ago, in a corner of Normandy, a peasant woman who was not accustomed to attend divine service, is seen coming out of the church. She explains that she has gone to place a *sou* in the holy water stoup. "In the stoup?" asks some one, "surely you mean the charity box?" "No, in the stoup." And the good dame says that she has a wart, and that the best way to get rid of it

[1] Fraysse, *Le Folklore du Beaugeois*, 1926, pp. 112-113.

[2] Lecoeur, *Esquisses du Bocage normand*, Condé-sur-Noireau, 1887, vol. ii. p. 112.

[3] Dr. Bidault, *Superstitions médicales du Morvan*, p. 34.

[4] Souche, *Croyances, présages et superstitions diverses*, Niort, 1880, p. 19.

is to go to church and put a *sou* in the stoup, saying: "May the one who takes my *sou* also take my wart." How could this method help proving successful since there will always be some one to take the sou ?[1]

As we see, it is not enough that the object to which one has recourse should be—or has been—living, in order that the evil may be transferred to it. Copper coins or small pebbles may do just as well. In the Beauce, to cure an ulcer called a *fourchet*, which grows on the hand at the base of the fingers, the patient goes by night to a cross-road forming a fork (*fourche*); he places his bad hand on a tuft of grass, and when this has been cut away, along with the adjoining sod, he puts his hand, for a few moments, in the hollow thus made, then, as a sort of offering to the earth, he deposits a coin in the hole, which is covered up with the reversed sod. He will be cured if, when going and coming and during the time spent at the cross-road, he has met no one. Otherwise, the entire performance will have to be repeated the following night.[2]

III

If a man is protected by his mascot, his fetish, or his talisman, he is also, it would seem, equally well protected by rites, by gestures, and by formulas. Here it is not the material of which an object is composed that is im-

[1] *La Vie catholique*, 18th April, 1925. M. Henri A. Junod tells me that on the Portuguese Littoral of Mozambique, when anyone succumbs to an illness, a collection is made of the chief objects belonging to the dead man—or at all events of those with which he has been in contact during his illness. A parcel is made of them which is placed on the road with the idea that some one will come along to carry away the disease and so cleanse the district. The malady, according to this conception, is something material, which has its existence in itself and must be transferred elsewhere if one would not suffer in consequence.

[2] Chapisseau, *Le Folklore de la Beauce et du Perche*, Paris, 1903, vol. ii. pp. 20-21.

portant, it is the way in which one does—or fails to do—some definite act.

It is interesting to observe, in a drawing-room, whether gentlemen, when lighting their cigarettes, will consent to light three with the same match. In many places this sort of taboo appears to be scarcely more than an impropriety which it is expedient to avoid. In actual fact, those who refrain from this so-called breach of good manners have heard it said that, if the thing takes place, a grave misfortune, and doubtless death, will befall one of the three smokers. For the moment, we will simply take note of this superstition; later on, we shall find out its origin. Father Gemelli, who has made such curious investigations,[1] quotes numerous luck-bringing practices in vogue long previous to the War, to which the War gave a new lease of life. He is speaking mainly of the Italian front. For instance, we have the writing on three tickets of the names of the three Wise Men of the East, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and the carrying of these three tickets in three different pockets. There is also the superstition that one avoids danger by carrying on one's person a bit of the plant called rue, or placing in three different pockets three small peas broken into three pieces enclosed in three little bags, care being taken to change the contents of the pockets each day. According to the same author, soldiers of the Abruzzi wore on their breast small bags containing soil of their native land. In moments of danger, and particularly in attack, they took a pinch and threw it over their shoulder. Other soldiers substituted for this soil some dust taken from a shrine. Mothers sent some to their sons in the fighting line.

[1] *Folklore di guerra* (in *Vita e Pensiero*, 1st January, 1917), and *Le superstitioni dei soldati in guerra* (éd. *Vita e Pensiero*).

Those who returned safe and sound often made a votive offering of the bag to their village chapel.[1]

Formulas of preservation are regarded as of sure efficacy. During the War I often in person experienced the existence and the force of this belief. The situation in which my family found itself was a tragic one; for more than twenty months life was passed in a state of extreme anxiety. Many people knew this, and we felt ourselves enveloped in an atmosphere of sympathy. Very often this sympathy expressed itself by an anonymous message, always the same, which came by post. Each time the address was in a different handwriting, from the most aristocratic to the most humble, the most clumsy and inexperienced. All this clearly indicated that the message came from many different places. It was a prayer, worded as follows, and with the accompanying commentary: "'O God, we beseech Thee to bless our soldiers and sailors. Keep them in the hollow of Thy hand. Protect them from all evil, and lead us to Thine eternal home. Amen.' This prayer has been addressed and distributed throughout the world. Copy it out, and you will see what will happen. It has been asserted that all who copy it will be exempt from calamity, and that those who neglect this opportunity will be visited by misfortune. Copy it out and address it to seven persons, beginning the very day you receive the prayer. On the seventh day you will meet with good fortune or will receive good news. Do not break this chain."[2]

[1] In this latter case, we discover the influence of the material employed. By sending to her son the soil of his native land, the Italian mother unites him, so to speak, by a bond of association, with the village to which she wishes to see him return.

[2] Cf. *Semaine religieuse de Genève*, 12th August, 1916. The Geneva review protested against this superstitious practice, as also did all the Protestant periodicals of France at that date. In England, *The Christian World* did the same

The following is a variant of this prayer chain : " Write this out nine times and send it to nine persons for whom you desire good luck. Do this within twenty-four hours. It is forbidden to break the chain ; whoever does so will be visited with misfortune. This chain was begun by an American officer and is intended to encircle the globe. Within nine days good fortune will be yours." [1]

Many variants of the prayer itself have been published. Father Roure reproduces the one entitled : *l'Oraison du Saint-Sépulcre*. The leaflet which accompanies it and recommends it gives the following information : " A priest, after saying mass, found in the *Saint-Sépulcre* a written prayer, wrapped in a cloth, and containing this explanatory note : whosoever carries this on his person will come to no harm, will not die a sudden death, will not fall into the hands of his enemies, will not be attacked by venomous creatures, will die neither in battle nor by any evil hap. No harm can come where this holy letter is." Certain texts of this prayer are accompanied by the following commentary : " This prayer has been kept from generation to generation in an old Norman family, the Brétignières de Courteilles, one of whose members wore it at the battle of Fontenoy ; he returned safe and sound after seeing nineteen officers killed by his side. Given and distributed by the family to all its members who have passed it on to all the officers and soldiers of their acquaintance who fought in the Franco-German War of 1870, it was ascertained that not one perished either in battle or as the result of wounds received." [2]

[1] *Revue d'Ethnographie*, 5th year, No. 18, 2nd quarter, 1924, p. 128. This formula is still in circulation. A copy which I received in March 1927 requests me to send one to each of nine persons during nine days. Each of these who receive the formula would therefore have to copy it out—a total of eighty-one copies !

[2] Father Roure, *Au pays de l'Occultisme*, p. 309.

Father Gemelli quotes a different copy containing the following note: "This prayer belongs to an ancient Sicilian family, the members of which, thanks to it, have invariably returned safe and sound from every war."[1]

It would be only too easy to give other examples of these luck-bringing prayers which bear a singular resemblance to formulas and amulets that are to be found in all uncivilized races. Suffice it to quote the text of a leaflet found on German soldiers, sometimes affixed to the last page of their little prayer book. This text promises immunity to whoever has it on his person. "If you doubt this," it concludes, "fasten it to a dog and then fire at the animal. The dog will not even be wounded."[2]

This prayer really typifies the formula which works by a kind of miraculous power, in virtue of the words of which it is made up. This is proved by the fact that, in order that it may operate, it is not necessary for the one using it to bring himself into any particular spiritual condition. All he has to do is to copy the formula out, without even thinking of it. It possesses an active efficacy *per se*, beneficent if the prescription is obeyed, maleficient if it is not. The happiness or the unhappiness in question has nothing in common with any preoccupation that can strictly be termed religious. The formula which, under the name of "the soldier's safeguard," was placed by scrupulously anonymous distributors in the hands of many Catholic soldiers in the British army, and which is closely related to *l'oraison du Saint-Sépulcre*, was

[1] In addition to the book already quoted, written by Father Gemelli, see the article by the Abbé Ch. Calippe: "Prières efficaces et porte-bonheur," in *la Revue du clergé français*, 1st February and 1st September, 1917. This article contains numerous variants of this prayer, as well as the text of several episcopal condemnations which endeavoured to check this superstition.

[2] Father Roure, *op. cit.* p. 312.

supposed to be endowed with the most admirable virtues : " Those who repeat it daily, or hear it read, or keep it on their person, will not die by sudden death, will not be swallowed up by the sea, will not fall into the hands of their enemies in battle, neither will poison have any effect upon them. If you meet anyone seized with a fit of coughing, place the prayer on his right side, and he will obtain relief and will thank God. And whoever repeats it daily will be warned of his death three days beforehand." [1]

This confidence in the automatically miraculous effect of a rite or formula shows itself in endlessly varied ways. One cannot even attempt to enumerate the most important of them. A male nurse, for whose culture and veracity I can vouch, served in an ambulance during the War. The head of this ambulance was fond of asserting that he himself was indifferent to religious belief of any kind. This did not prevent him from wearing, suspended to his wrist by a small chain, a medal bearing the number 13. He declared that he had not the slightest faith in the efficacy of this medal, but that he wore it to please his mother. And he generally added the words : " I, at all events, shall not be hit." Why did he say these words ? . . . He was aware that one of the men under him was a clergyman by profession. Whenever a party of stretcher-bearers was formed for bringing away the wounded from the battle-field, and the clergyman was one of them, he did not feel at ease until he was assured that the latter " had said his prayers." He requested him to " say " them before starting, and was really satisfied only after he had seen him take his new Testament and put it in his pocket. Evidently in such a case, to the mechanical efficacy of recited forms and prayers there was

[1] Father Roure, *op. cit.* p. 312.

added in the opinion of this man—who regarded himself as a strong-minded individual—the special consideration of the secret virtue attached to a kind of sacred personality and to an equally sacred book.

There is one thing even more amazing than any of these facts, and that is the ease with which any number of them can be collected, if one investigates at all closely.

IV

Of all the mysterious associations which so passionately interest uncivilized peoples, there is perhaps no single one which is not the object of a similar belief in the so-called higher societies. Occult relationships are asserted to exist between the most heterogeneous phenomena without their fundamental elements ever having been examined. They are accepted now, because they have been accepted for incalculable ages past, and their forms transmitted from generation to generation. Thus, along with the notion of a world subject to scientifically observable laws, we have, in spite of all our experience, the imaginary vision of a world in which everything happens in accordance with the laws formerly imposed on minds dominated by affective phenomena, and incapable of discussing either the suggestions of their emotions or the fantastic explanations which satisfied their perturbed thoughts. In this mental picture of the world, everything is linked with everything else, according to relations inspired by superficial comparisons and which a credulity impatient to obtain an explanation of any kind has kept proof against all critical investigation.

Here the law of similarity plays a rôle of the first importance, as also does that which presupposes continual

communication between things that have once been united or simply in contact with one another. These occult bonds are not disputed, they are believed in most fervently. For instance, they are asserted to be most constant between human life and that heavenly body which, by reason of the regularity of its phases, has at all times puzzled mankind. When the moon is waning, it is thought in many countries throughout Europe that those plants must be planted which go down into the earth: carrots, radishes, etc. When the moon is waxing, there must be sown those that rise above the soil: cereals, leguminous plants, etc. For like reasons, the hair must not be cut when the moon is on the wane: there would be danger of its not growing any more. The hair must be cut at the new moon, just when it is beginning to increase in length; in this case, the hair is certain to continue growing. Likewise, the moon's phases must be considered in the cure of skin diseases. When the moon is waning, a branch of barberry must be plucked, over which has been said a special prayer which brings the branches into the right relationship with the person interested. In proportion as the branch withers, the disease decreases. When the branch is quite dry, the disease has disappeared. Such a relationship may be set up, between a human being and a tree or shrub, that whatever happens to the latter affects the former. In many lands a rose tree is planted on the day that the child is born, and it will be quite specially tended, because the state of the plant's prosperity will have a corresponding effect upon the health and happiness of the child.

Vegetables are in such constant relation to the state of the atmosphere that they will everywhere be expected to supply indications as to the probable state of the weather.

Amongst many rural populations the following practice is in vogue: the little cupules of an onion which lie within one another are separated. A dozen of these are arranged in a circle, and on each of them is placed a pinch of salt. Each cupule represents a month of the year. That upon which the salt melts rapidly, reveals the fact that the corresponding month will be rainy; if the salt does not melt, it will be a dry month. To discover just where the prophetic circle begins the year, appeal is made to chance, the eyes are closed and one of the cupules is indicated by means of a needle.

When living beings have become related to one another in a definite way, for instance, a man and those ingenious little creatures the bees, it is held that a bond exists between the inhabitants of a hive and their proprietor. When the latter dies, therefore, it is important to inform the bees of the fact without delay, and to tell them to whom they will belong in future. If this precaution were not taken, they would die shortly after their owner. There is also said to be a profound relationship between a man's personality and the name he bears. We are acquainted with a youth who is fickle and care-free, in a word, a pleasure-seeker. His aunt tells us that she blamed the youth's father for having named his son after an uncle who had turned out badly. She asserts that this was a case of the relation between cause and effect.[1]

Finally, there is the belief in the very firm bond existing between what has touched the human body and the body itself. In the Emmenthal (a canton of Berne), the fol-

[1] "On the banks of the Zambezi," says M. Th. Burnier, "I saw a weakly ailing child between five and six years of age, whose distressing condition was explained to me by the name he bore. Thereupon they gave him the name of an uncle who was strong and healthy: this, they said, was the best way to make the child also strong."

lowing rite is often practised. When a person is dead, what is called "the death sweat," is conscientiously wiped from the body; then the cloth used for the purpose is taken away and attached to the trunk of an apple-tree that bears sweet apples. There it is left until, under the combined influence of rain, wind, and sun, the stuff is completely destroyed. While this decomposition is taking place, the bitterness of death passes into the apple-tree, or rather, is absorbed by its sweet fruit; and when there is nothing of the cloth left, one is persuaded that the soul of the departed is wholly set free from the body, that nothing any longer separates it from eternal bliss. There is a strict analogy between what has taken place in the tomb and what has taken place on the tree.

In another canton of Switzerland, they cut into long strips the sheet in which a person has died; then they tie these strips round the trunks of a few trees. The latter inherit the occult force that has been communicated to these peculiar ligaments.

Where shall we end a list which it would be only too easy to continue? Perhaps what here interests us most is the combination of magical processes which may be employed, by the aid of these imaginary laws, either at the expense of people upon whom it is desired to exercise constraint, or against those one fears, or, for reasons of self-interest, wishes to injure. Exactly as in the case of the uncivilized, that which serves as the basis for these processes is faith, whether in special virtues that are often connected with the very name borne by the object used, or in some bond which continues to unite an object to the person with whom it has been in contact.

In the East End of London, says *The Times* of 29th September, 1916, young girls asked a herbalist to sell

them a pennyworth of tormentil root. The lover of one of them was proving lukewarm in his affections : on the advice of a fortune-teller she was about to burn this herb on Friday midnight, and this was supposed to make the fickle swain so unhappy that he would return to the girl he had left.

In this case, it is really the name that has suggested the use of the root. Other considerations, however, come more frequently into play. In a seaside resort, the name of which is given, a chamber-maid every Wednesday performs mysterious operations on an old shoe in order that visitors may come in large numbers and she may receive liberal tips. In order to be able to repeat the performance regularly, she takes care to put on one side any old shoes left behind by the boarders. The idea is that shoes, being in contact with the feet, are strongly impregnated with the personality of the wearer, just as would be his clothes, and anything that comes from his body, such as hair and finger-nails. To act upon them is equivalent to acting upon the living being. The chamber-maid, by means of the old shoe left behind by the traveller, wishes to compel him to return to the hotel, so that her pocket may benefit thereby.[1] Is it judging rashly to suppose that travellers are not in the habit of leaving behind their old shoes, and that the chamber-maid may have indulged in a little pilfering ?

[1] Cf. *Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires*, 1923, No. 76, p. 172. A book which appeared in Berlin in 1837, on the subject of popular beliefs in Prussia, states that, according to many people, when a thief cannot be stopped, the best thing to do is to take any article of clothing which he may have dropped in his flight, and beat it vigorously. Then the thief will certainly fall ill. " This belief," says Frazer, quoting the above-mentioned book in his *Golden Bough*, " is deeply rooted in the minds of the people. Sixty or seventy years ago, in the village of Bérend, a man was caught stealing honey. Blows were showered upon the cloak he had dropped in his flight. On hearing of this, he became so terrified that he took to his bed and died."

Another matter, which terminated in the law-courts, is that of the fanatics who took upon themselves to flog the curé of Bombon. This is not the first time that the press has dealt with the hot-heads hovering around the visionary concièrge of Bordeaux, Mme. Marie Mesmin. From the month of January 1920, the law-courts have had to deal with these wild enthusiasts, and it is useful to remind ourselves of some of their exploits. Mme. Mesmin is to-day fifty-eight years of age. On various occasions she has imagined herself the victim of withcraft. Since her youth she has suffered, so she relates, from the evil spells cast upon her by a rejected sweetheart. Again, about 1903, a woman neighbour caused her trouble by strange methods, known to none but herself. Finally, she asserts that her father-in-law died as the result of magical machinations. When on a voyage to Lourdes, about the year 1907, she purchased a plaster statue of the Virgin. This she placed in the kitchen where she was staying, daily praying before it. Suddenly, the statue began to shed tears. There is no need to enter here into the detailed discussions resulting from this so-called miracle, nor to tell how the abode of Marie Mesmin became a centre of morbid piety, notwithstanding the warnings of the archbishop. What interests us more particularly is the arrival in this fraternity of the archimandrite Saboungi, a Syrian who, from the day of his arrival, played an important part. This somewhat suspicious individual seems to have boasted that he possessed superhuman powers. He believed in witchcraft, claimed that it was constantly being practised in the East, and stoutly asserted that people were caused to die when far away. Mme. Mesmin accuses him of having frequently cut up pieces of black cassock and strips of red material in the form of

dolls, of having modelled small figures in wax, and of having performed mysterious ceremonies over these uncouth images. She does not fail to attribute to these torturings of wax images certain deaths which took place about that time. So bitter grew the quarrel between Saboungi, who was accused of all sorts of horrors, and Mme. Mesmin, who taxed him with practising criminal sorceries upon her, that four of the latter's friends decided upon a regular crusade against the Syrian, who fled to Nantes. These were respectable inhabitants of Bordeaux, a broker, a detective inspector, a violinist, and a clerk in an insurance office. They blamed the archimandrite for having certainly caused the death of several persons, of causing pain to Marie Mesmin, of having, for example, bitten her from a distance. They forced the Syrian's door, jostled him about, threw him onto his bed and flogged him soundly. Then they made a thorough search of his house, looking for the objects he used in his sorceries. "As Saboungi refused to give anything up," said one of these benevolent redressers of wrongs, "I went through the rooms and discovered a skull in a cupboard, also part of the documents we were seeking. I also came across pieces of black and red material, probably taken from cassocks, though they had not yet assumed any suggestion of witchcraft. On my return to Bordeaux, Mme. Mesmin told me that Saboungi made use of this material to represent the forms of those whom he wished to injure. We did not find any wax dolls, for Saboungi throws them into the fire after the incantations. This is the explanations of certain burns from which Mme. Mesmin suffered. Indeed, she is in continual pain because of the evil spells cast upon her by Saboungi, and has had to undergo a major operation." Another

accused person confirms this testimony: "I may add," he says, "that all the time Saboungi was ill, Mme. Mesmin was free from her obession and in good health. Ever since he began to improve her pains have recommenced. I am certain that my comrades and myself are condemned to death by Saboungi, and I fear for my family."[1]

The same belief in witchcraft, six years later, must have united other friends of Marie Mesmin against another priest, the Abbé Denoyers, curé of Bombon. One of the individuals incited against the priest has explained precisely the kind of power which he attributed to this

[1] The flogged archimandrite did not fail to lodge a complaint. It seems to us of interest to reproduce the judgment given by the Bordeaux court of justice. The terms of the verdict are singularly moderate, so moderate even that they seem to prepare the way for hypotheses favourable to the declarations of the accused:

"Whereas the accused declare that they have flogged the Abbé Saboungi in order to put an end to the torturing of the wax image of Marie Mesmin;

"Whereas premeditation is certain, each of the accused, before leaving Bordeaux, had taken the object necessary for obtaining the desired result; Parautel took a rubber tube filled with bits of lead, Floris had bought a dog whip, Berton a rattan (Perpignan) switch, and Cardon had handcuffs in his pocket;

"Whereas on arriving at Nantes they went to mass and partook of communion, asking God to give them strength to carry out their mission, though without doing anything criminal;

"Whereas the four accused men confess to the charges brought against them, are proud of them, and declare that, if it should so happen, they would be disposed to repeat the offence, though maintaining that they acted in legitimate defence of another;

"Whereas, in order that article 428 of the Penal Code may be applicable, it is necessary that the blows should have been dealt as a matter of actual necessity for the legitimate defence of oneself or of another;

"Whereas it cannot be a matter of their legitimate personal defence, since they have explained that all four of them went to Nantes, so that they might be able to get the better of the Abbé Saboungi;

"Whereas Marie Mesmin, not being at Nantes, the danger for her was not at the place where the blows were dealt;

"Whereas they could defend her only from a danger that took place at a distance;

"Whereas, *in the present state of science, it is not certain that the evils of which Marie Mesmin complains have been caused by the witchcraft of the Abbé Saboungi,* and that her life has been endangered;

ecclesiastic: "I know that witchcraft and black masses are practised by him. This very day I experienced an act of sorcery on his part, for on entering the church I had placed my hat on a bench, and just as I was leaving the sacristy, after the scene of the scourging, my hat had disappeared." The fanatic was persuaded that the curé had taken it, and that in future he might practise witchcraft of every kind upon him. When they thought of the Abbé Denoyers, all these people reasoned like negroes or Kanakas. They were all agreed in saying to the journalists: "He is a wicked priest, a bad man. But he knows a great deal, he is the greatest magician of the age! He can compass the death of any one within twenty-four hours, making

"Whereas it is not certain, on the other hand, that the means employed by the accused for her defence are calculated to put an end to the pains she experiences;

"Whereas the Abbé Saboungi has appeared as prosecutor and demands payment of the sum of 25,000 francs damages in compensation for the wrong he has sustained;

"Whereas the principle of the demand is justified by medical certificates produced at the trial; and the court possesses adequate grounds for estimating the wrong endured at the sum of 500 francs, the attitude of the Abbé Saboungi not being in this matter wholly free from reproach;

"On these grounds, the court, after examination, declares Floris, Parautel, Berton, and Cardon guilty of the charges alleged; states that they did not act in lawful defence of themselves or of others; condemns each of them to three months' imprisonment, with privilege of First Offenders' Act, and decreeing on the motions of the plaintiff, condemns them severally and jointly to pay to the Abbé Saboungi the sum of 500 francs damages in compensation for the wrong they have done him;

"Convicts the plaintiff in costs, reserving appeal."

The words given in italics were certainly taken from another verdict pronounced on the 4th of February, 1851, at the police court of Yerville. Everybody knows that a verdict of this kind does not constitute law. This verdict, however, had the most extraordinary fortune. It is quoted as a first class authority in all the works that deal with magic. It has helped to promulgate among people, frequently very ignorant, a legend whereby supernatural events are supposed to be in a sort of way officially recognized. Cited complacently by authors differing greatly in worth, it certainly influenced the Bordeaux judgment we have just read. It is simply monstrous—to say the least of it—that a document of this kind, of no legal value whatsoever, should have been taken into consideration by a police magistrate. In the *Mercure de France* of 1920 (1st August, pp. 678-682) will be found the complete text of this judgment, along with the circumstances under which the verdict was pronounced.

him suffer or not, just as he pleases." And one after another accused him before the examining magistrate :[1] " My father," said a young girl, " died in August 1925. He was an officer in Syria. . . . Mme. Mesmin told me that it was the Abbé Denoyers who was angry with mama, and had caused my father's death. Moreover, according to Mme. Mesmin, the Abbé Denoyers was in correspondence with the Abbé Saboungi, it was they who had let loose war in Syria." " From the time that Marie Mesmin met the Abbé Denoyers," said another witness, " she began to get worse. Gradually her sufferings increased, and even now she is still very ill. . . . Often have I heard her cry out in extreme pain : ' Send away that Abbé Denoyers, he is killing me.' " " During the past fifteen months," said another, " the condition of Marie Mesmin has become much worse. Several times she has received the last sacrament. Often her whole body bears traces of wounds which would appear to have been inflicted with a penknife. These wounds cause the appearance of white pimples which turn a fiery red and occasion intense suffering." " She declared to me," said another, " that in her sufferings she saw the Abbé Denoyers casting spells upon her, and that she was startled by this supernatural presence. . . . Personally I have been a victim of the evil practices of the Abbé Denoyers. As midnight was striking I felt myself turn round in bed. My suffering was so great that I thought

[1] All the following quotations have been taken word for word from the minutes of the cross-examination. I should here like to express to Maître Maurice Garçon my gratitude for his kindness in allowing me to consult the essential parts of this trial. While correcting the proofs of this present volume, I have received a pamphlet entitled : " The Second Trial of the Weeping Virgin " (a reprint from the *Mercure de France*, 15th July, 1927), in which Maître M. Garçon, under the pseudonym of Jules Maurice, has again related the whole affair with rare legal precision and a wealth of documentary evidence.

I should faint. On the morrow, when seated at table, I burst into hysterical laughter. I cannot explain what form the sorcery took, my children will tell you better than I can."

These wildly excited individuals were asked what methods the curé of Bombon employed against them. Then they began to tell of all kinds of charms. "I felt depressed," said one of them, "and suffering from lack of phosphates." "I had varicose veins, and, in spite of medical attention from two doctors . . . my condition remained stationary. I had the impression that witchcraft was acting on me with great force. It was the birds that brought it." On this latter point, another witness was more precise: "We saw," he said, "small birds coming every day and depositing the evil charm in Marie Mesmin's garden; and when Marie Mesmin afterwards trod upon their excrement, she at once felt the evil attacking her, for these birds had been sent by the Abbé Denoyers."

In this distracted fraternity, as in Africa and Oceania, life becomes a haunting terror. Nothing is regarded as natural: everything—good and evil alike—is the product of mysterious influences, and these occult powers are almost invariably those of a spirit. When a man is dominated by a belief of this kind, the one important thing is that he should protect himself from malevolent and secret interference. It is this that roused the people of Bombon to beat the curé. They accused him of being possessed by a spirit who wished them ill. Nothing more was needed to rouse them against him. Why did they pummel him so soundly? Simply in order to extract the demon from his bodily envelope. "I was determined," says one, "to make him withdraw his evil spells, and this

practice is in accordance with the prescriptions of theology." "Who taught you that?" some one asked him. "In my circle of acquaintances," he answered, "I have always heard it said that scourging was the only way to deal with demons."

Deep within the obscure mental and emotional conditions we have just analyzed are stirring identical passions with those that Coillard noted on the banks of the Zambezi, and which gave rise to so many atrocities among those who live in dread of sorcerers and evil spirits. "I have no regrets," declares one of the accused persons at Bombon. "Had the abbé been willing to cease his witchcraft, we should not have come. He would not leave us alone. I consider that I did my duty in chastising him. Our decision was dictated mainly by the state of Rose Moreau, who became demented in consequence of the evil practices wrought upon her by the Abbé Denoyers, and also by the state of Marie Mesmin who passed through alternations of good and ill-health, which we were powerless to avert by reciting prayers and masses." "I do not regret what I did," says another accused man, "for the thrashing we inflicted on the abbé is nothing compared with the evil he himself wrought upon Marie Mesmin and upon us all. I struck him, after discovering that the civil and ecclesiastical authorities were not interested in what befell us. It is my opinion that when the authorities refuse to protect us, we have the right to take justice into our own hands."

Here, then, under the prompting of exasperated fright, we see what it is that causes an individual to take the initiative in defending and avenging himself.

V

But little is wanted for flagellation, even of a brutal nature, to be replaced by violence of a more serious kind. Terror, rage, murder: are there not cases in which transition from one to the other would be quite easy?

In his work on *Le Diable*, Maître Maurice Garçon mentions a number of these cases of panic terror and cruelty. In 1824 at Bournel (Lot-et-Garonne), lived a woman who was supposed to be a witch. Two of her neighbours determined to burn her alive. She was rescued just in time, and the neighbours were condemned by the jury to the pillory and imprisonment with hard labour. On the 21st of September, 1836, at Laval, an old man accused of having bewitched a child, was tortured in the most abominable fashion. At Méry, also in 1836, a woman named Sestre was martyred on the advice of the doctor, who declared that sorcery alone could explain an epidemic. In 1843, at Chanceaux, a distance of eight kilometres from Tours, a family named Avril were assaulted by neighbours, who were bent on killing them because of the witchcraft they practised.[1]

The same terror everywhere produces the same reaction. In 1922, at San Remo, the mother of an ailing child, instead of consulting a doctor, applies to a witch to discover the origin of the sorcery from which the child suffers. "Take the liver of a white hen," says the witch, "place it in a new pan which you have bought without bargaining. Sprinkle over it a fairly large number of pins, and the baby's long-clothes, and let the whole simmer on a slow fire until you hear the sound of small stones, groans, and the ringing of bells." Before giving the

[1] *Le Diable*, pp. 141-142.

prescription, the witch made mysterious passes over the child, pronounced cabalistic sentences, and declared that the whole trouble was due to the incantations of a woman neighbour. This denunciation immediately inflamed the imagination of all. Frenzied terror took possession of the family at the thought of the possibility of the wretched criminal entering the child's bedroom. As a matter of fact, the woman, ignorant of the accusation and wishing to show her sympathy, did appear at the door. The sick child, who had doubtless been almost scared to death, sat up in bed, uttering curses upon her, and the terrified perso - present witnessed the most extraordinary happenings: dishes changed their place; the light went out and then suddenly appeared again, etc. Naturally, they pounced upon the visitor and belaboured her with blows. She had great difficulty in making her escape. The San Remo tribunal before which the whole matter was brought, simply decreed that the innocent and unhappy woman had been set upon and thrashed by terror-stricken relatives.[1]

[1] *Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires*, No. 18, 2nd half-year of 1924, p. 115. Here is a case observed and narrated by a near relative of my own. The events took place in a commune of the Lower Rhine: "A little girl had suffered several weeks from diarrhoea, and the doctor was unable to discover the cause of the trouble. Medicine did not bring about any improvement. At last, the little patient refused all food. At this stage her mother met one of her cousins who strongly advised her to go and see a man in the village, as the same thing had happened in the case of her own baby. So they went to the house of this 'sorcerer' or rather 'seer,' as he was called. When confronted with the child, this man explained what was the matter. He said that a village woman had cast a spell upon her. He did not know who the woman was, but if the parents would only take the child back home and immediately shut her up in a dark room and give her no food, if the mother alone would go from time to time to see what she was doing, and if everything were done in the utmost secrecy, then the woman who had cast the spell would finally come and ask how the little one was progressing. In this way she would denounce herself, and the charm would be broken. I asked what would impel the woman to come in this fashion. It appears that these casters of spells suffer greatly from the time when a visit is paid to the seer, relief coming only after they have thus denounced themselves. When three days had elapsed, in the

The hallucinating dread of witchcraft finds its inevitable correspondence in the obsession to rid oneself of the man or the woman whose hatred is felt weighing heavily upon one. In Normandy, a minister with whom I am well acquainted once met in a hollow road in the neighbourhood where he lives, an entire family, parishioners of his. They had each a little mysterious bag hanging from the neck, and were grouped around one of their number who was armed with a gun. On being plied with questions, they confessed that an enemy was employing mysterious means to kill them, whereas they were determined to rid themselves of him before he succeeded. The clergyman had to use all his influence to induce them to take the gun back. He was by no means certain that his reasoned arguments and his rebukes had really freed them from the terrors which a whole line of tradition had inspired in them, but he was sure that he had prevented murder from taking place that day. The slightest incident might have sufficed to precipitate events.

A colleague of this clergyman, with whom also I am very closely acquainted, was implicated in a story, all of whose details, which have been carefully verified, are of the greatest interest. One day he received a letter from parishioners living in a village in Normandy: a family of three, consisting of a widow, her daughter and her son. The latter, whose life was somewhat checkered, was a sailor; it was he who had written the letter. He requested the minister to receive his sister and administer Holy Communion. The minister explained that things were not done in this fashion, and that Communion is

present instance, a woman actually called to inquire about the child. Instantaneously, it is asserted, the child was cured and asked for food. The question was not raised whether the cessation of this infantile diarrhoea might have not been due to a three days' low diet."

administered in church, and in the presence of other communicants. A second letter arrived, beseeching the minister to return a favourable answer and ending: "It is a matter of life and death for my sister, my mother, and myself." This strange phrase pricked the minister's curiosity. He replied that he would cycle over, about seven o'clock in the evening. By an odd coincidence, the minister had just had new tyres—"unpuncturable," they were called—fitted on to his machine. Now, the workman who had fitted them to the wheels had surreptitiously introduced a couple of needles to see if the tyres really were unpuncturable. En route, the expected accident took place, causing a delay of three-quarters of an hour. On reaching his destination, the minister found the family in a state of considerable alarm, excitedly remarking upon the delay. He excused himself and explained what had happened, whereupon his hostess exclaimed: "The reason you have arrived, monsieur, is that God is with us, and with you also. It should not have been in your power to come, but you proved the stronger." Their features were distorted and their eyes wide open with dread. The family sat down to table. Then the sailor said that for some time past strange deaths had come about, both of human beings and of cattle. "The corpses," he said, "become quite black." "An epidemic," explained the minister. "The doctors don't know what it is, but we know. There is a curate here who performs black masses. When he does this, and the sorcerer also goes through one of his tricks, some one dies. Now, we have discovered that a black mass is about to be said against us. Thereupon I thought that it was necessary, at all costs, to counteract this sacrilegious mass by the communion of Christ. As I myself am an unworthy sinner,

it came into my head that my sister, a virgin, would be able to communicate. If you refuse us communion, you condemn us to death." Again the minister began to explain that the demand made of him is impossible, but he would like to have further information. Each time the sailor answered these questions with the words: "I cannot answer; if I explained things to you, I should fall dead on the spot." The minister could induce him to speak by nothing less than the threat to abandon the whole family to whatever might happen. Thereupon, the sailor explained that they had been shown their enemy in a glass jug, and had been warned that a black mass was about to be celebrated against them. After this confession, the sailor was compelled to recognize that he had not fallen dead on the ground, and this fact emboldened him to say that he had been told of a spider which every evening at the same hour made its appearance on the bedroom ceiling, as a sign of the witchcraft that was taking place. And now he again refused to say who had told him all this. Again the minister threatened to leave. Accordingly, the sailor denounced his informant, and once more found that he had not been struck dead. From that moment the minister directed the full force of his exhortations to persuading his interlocutors that the evil power in which they believed was ineffectual against those who put their trust in God. His endeavours were directed to abolishing the fear with which these people were obsessed. Finally he said to them: "When you see the spider again, you will kill it." "But, monsieur, if I kill the spider, I shall fall down dead." "You did not fall dead when you told me what I asked of you the other day." A few days afterwards the minister received a letter couched in the following terms: "I took upon myself to kill that spider. A cold sweat

came over me; but now we feel that we are liberated from the evil. We know we are under God's protection, and we thank you." Here again, by doing away with fear, that also was suppressed which would speedily have set honest folk on the downward slope that would have led to crime.

And how many are there who have taken that downward track?

The cases we have just examined are altogether typical. Still, they are individual cases, and liable to infect, if at all, only within a restricted circle. And yet, we are beginning to discover how the passions roused tend to be communicated from one individual to another.

In 1925, at Uttenheim in the Lower Rhine, the gamekeeper, Joseph Sur, and his entire family—his wife and seven children, the eldest of whom is twenty-five years of age—regarded themselves as victims of witchcraft. The hallucinations, which gradually become collective, began in the mental condition of one of the daughters, aged twenty-five, who was the first to complain of the mysterious phenomena which all the members of the family in turn imagined that they experienced. The whole village was speedily made acquainted with the stories which passed from mouth to mouth. The Sur family made accusations against certain young men and women; hence endless discussions and quarrels, the so-called sorcerers being anything but satisfied with the reputation they were gaining. In the course of the evening of Easter Monday, the 13th of April, the father, warned that one of his sons had been threatened at the inn by two of the sorcerers, Böspflug and Marbach, borrowed a sporting gun. Accompanied by three of his sons, he made his way towards the house of Böspflug. The latter, followed by

Marbach, came out into the yard and questioned the newcomers. Sur fired at Marbach, who fell like a log. A medico-legal examination found that Sur was suffering from no mental disorder. Moreover, being sent to prison and thereby kept apart from that which had infected the whole family, listening also to the admonitions of the prison chaplain, he lost his belief in sorcerers, though the rest of the family obstinately continued therein. He expressed sorrow for what he had done, and explained that the reason why he was unwilling to enter into a previous explanation with his victim was that he did not like speaking to a sorcerer. But he claimed that it was not so much on account of his being a sorcerer that he wanted to kill him. He was only defending his menaced son. As the jury admitted the plea of provocation and refused to find that there was any premeditation, Sur was condemned to two years' imprisonment. This case clearly shows how, in any one group of persons, terror may become collective, as also may the passions that culminate in murder.[1]

[1] The magistrate of the Lower Rhine, to whom I am indebted for this story, took advantage of this incident to inquire into the beliefs prevalent in the vicinity. From his young servant maid, who came from the Saverne district, he obtained the following facts: "My father's cows were no longer yielding milk. A neighbouring woman is suspected of having cast a spell upon them: she is a witch, for in her house has been seen a holy water font in which was soaking a hen's foot. One evening, the father sees in the stable a cat leaping up and down on the backs of the cattle. He strikes her with a stick. The following day it is discovered that the neighbour has her shoulder dislocated. The village curé is bringing extreme unction to a dying woman. It is nighttime. A cat leaps upon him and scratches his face. He flings it off and throws a stone at it, hitting the animal's left hind paw. The curé arrives at the dying woman's house; it is discovered that her left leg is broken. The curé would not say mass until he has ascertained that there is nothing under the altar cloth. Indeed, sorcerers are accustomed to place various objects there, so that, after being consecrated, they may use it in witchcraft." It is noteworthy that, in the collective hallucinations of the Sur family, human beings who transform themselves into cats in order to lie oppressively on the breast of their victims, play an important part. Compare these beliefs with those on the Congo, referring to men-tigers. (See Appendix I.)

In March 1926, near Louvière in Belgium, the son of a baker of Maurage having fallen ill, it was rumoured that he was the victim of an evil spell. This idea gradually took possession of a group of friends, provoking great excitement amongst them. One individual, Achille B., more hot-headed than the rest, suggested that, if the charm was to be broken, they must settle with the person guilty of this witchcraft. But no one knew who this could be. They decided upon a strange method of divination : the guilty person would assuredly be the first woman who passed in front of the cemetery at a certain hour of a certain day, they must seize her, and then take her to the baker and roast her in his oven. The fanatics lay in ambush, and pounced upon the first woman they saw approaching, though she was none other than the wife of a respectable doctor, living in Brussels. They dragged her away to the baker's, and there made ready to inflict on her the punishment which was to bring to an end the so-called witchcraft. The baker hesitated before the deed they wished to impose upon him. He declared that his son was getting better and ordered that Mme. P. should be released. What would have happened in other times ? At a time and place where the belief in magic and sorcery was general, the emotions aroused by such cases would rapidly spread throughout a vast region and would call forth collective reactions.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, the Monk Guibert de Nogent, along with his cousin Lysiard, Bishop of Soissons, acted as judge when two heretics, the brothers Evrard and Clément, of the village of Bucy, were being tried. The brothers had been denounced by an old matron whom they had bewitched for a period extending over a year ; also by a deacon who claimed to have heard

them engaged in evil discourse. The ceremonies attributed to them were simply monstrous—the same that have been attributed to heretics at all times. The trial proved difficult to conduct. When questioned, the culprits, poor simple-minded men who believed that the kingdom of God was theirs, replied : " In the name of God, do not attempt to fathom our thoughts so thoroughly ; we believe all that you say ! " They could not be convinced that they were in the wrong. All the same, a test must be carried out ; so it was decided to throw them into a large vat full of water. After receiving the holy communion, they swore that they had never said, believed, or taught anything contrary to the Christian faith. Clément, on being flung into the water, swam about. The bishop did not know what to do. He referred the matter to the Synod of Beauvais. The mass of worshippers had fewer scruples. During the absence of Lysiard and Guibert, they ran to the prison, carried off the heretic brothers, and burned them on a pile erected outside the town. So the matter was settled.[1] And is it not always and unhesitatingly settled when the environment does not offer greater opposition to the mental contagion ? In Russia, which has reverted in these sad days to the darkness of the Middle Ages, have we not seen, at Vologda, the crowds besieging the Museum where, it was said, the devil was imprisoned in a glass jar ?[2]

Would not the terror capable of obsessing a whole mass of people, along with the violent reactions it inspires, culminate in similar actions amongst ourselves if they were not almost immediately confronted with our present-day environment ? They are checked in their manifes-

[1] Bernard Monod, *Le moine Guibert et son temps*, pp. 210-214.

[2] Serge de Chassin, *L'Apocalypse russe*, 1922 (Preface, p. 111).

tation, and consequently enfeebled.[1] Their power of attraction is therefore infinitely less than among uncivilized peoples, where there is nothing established or organized to check their diffusion. Still, if circumstances were the same, would not the actions inspired by panic be identical?

[1] Tarde finds in the memoirs of Gisquet, prefect of police under Louis Philippe, a curious instance of these epidemics of fear and anger: "In Paris (April 1832), when the cholera epidemic was at its height rumours, *propagated throughout Paris with lightning rapidity, attributed the effects of the epidemic to poison*, and caused the masses—ever impressionable at such times—to believe that men were poisoning food, water, wine, and other drinks. . . . Within a few moments there were immense crowds on the quais, the Place de Grève, etc. Perhaps never before had there been seen in Paris so formidable a gathering of persons *exasperated by the idea that they were being poisoned and seeking the authors of these imaginary crimes*." The whole was just one collective delirium of persecution. Every one who carried bottles, phials, or small parcels was suspected; *a mere scent-bottle might become evidence against one* in the eyes of the raving multitude. Gisquet himself went about amongst "these sullen, ragged masses," and, he says, "no words could express their hideousness and the impression of terror caused by the dull rumbling murmurs." Such demented creatures were readily converted into assassins. A youth, employed at the Ministry of the Interior was massacred in the rue Saint-Denis on suspicion of wanting to throw poison in the jars of a wine dealer. . . . Four massacres took place under these conditions. . . . Similar scenes at Vaugirard and the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Here "two imprudent individuals took to flight, pursued by thousands of madmen who *accused them of having given some children a poisoned piece of bread and butter*." The two men hastily concealed themselves in a guard-house, but this is at once surrounded by a threatening mob, and nothing could then have prevented them from being massacred had not the commissary of police and a retired justice of the peace conceived the happy idea of sharing between them the piece of bread and butter which they ate in sight of the vast crowd. *The presence of mind thus displayed at once transformed the fury of the mob into a state of joyous hilarity* (Gabriel Tarde, *L'opinion et la foule*, pp. 187-188). Here we have a condition of collective delirium closely akin to that which the fear of witchcraft calls forth in a different environment.

CHAPTER V

ON THE THRESHOLD OF MAGIC

HOW are these phenomena—with which volumes could be filled, though here only a few instances are given—to be explained? We are in the habit of regarding them as survivals. As a matter of fact, in many cases we are dealing with practices and beliefs that date back to extremely distant times, that have been handed down from century to century, and are, as it were, set alongside of or underlying our other opinions, those that we hold by virtue of being civilized beings. Doubtless it would be an easy matter to regard survival as applying to certain of these practices and beliefs which from time immemorial have been taught to generation after generation. Cases, however, are not infrequent when one has the impression of being confronted, not with ideas or acts obviously bequeathed by the past, nor even with a tradition whose continued existence it would be possible to follow down the ages, but rather with ideas and acts which are, as it were, discovered anew by individuals in whom we are astonished to find them. If this impression is correct, then that which was re-appears, not because it has never ceased to be, but as a result of a kind of spontaneous creation. The theory of survival is not false in every respect, but the complete truth is without doubt far more interesting than this partial truth.

I

Is the belief in magic due to a defective employment of the principle of cause and effect—as has long been believed, and is still asserted, especially by the English ethnological school? Is it the result of hasty induction, of hurried associations of ideas, of that unconscious intellectual process which is at the root of the well-known fallacy: *post hoc, ergo propter hoc?* It would be anything but difficult to find facts in confirmation of this hypothesis. Still, there are many others for which this hypothesis does not account. Before applying it to uncivilized man let it be granted that it is inadequate to explain what takes place amongst ourselves.

We will go back to one of the superstitions already encountered. We are told that we must not light three cigarettes with the same match. Extraordinary to relate, this superstition is one of those whose origin is well known to us. It does not go back far, no earlier than the Boer War. If an English soldier lit his cigarette rapidly with a match, the enemy—and the Boers, as is well known, are excellent shots—had scarcely time to take aim at him. If the same match remained burning long enough to light a second cigarette the danger increased. But if the match continued alight long enough for a third cigarette, there was every probability that one of the trio would receive a bullet through the head. Such an experience gave rise to emotions which, when repeated a number of times, asserted themselves upon the mind. An automatic association of ideas was set up between this emotion and the fact which regularly preceded it. Among the troops in South Africa, the conviction was established that the act was decidedly a dangerous one, and, without

further explanation, it spread to all the soldiers of the various British armies. When the British came to the help of the Belgians and the French they brought this irrational belief with them to the Continent. Nor is it difficult to understand why they passed it on to their new comrades. What must be taken into consideration is the mental state of the Europeans to whom this experience was imparted. At the front, they were daily in a state of uncertainty. Though fully masters of themselves, there was yet, in a more or less conscious or subconscious state, an emotional element in their inmost being. They were quite ready to admit that precautions must be taken against this danger. Not that at first they had great faith in the efficacy of this precaution, but they repeated to one another the saying which in Europe keeps alive so many practices of a more or less superstitious nature: "After all, if it does no good, neither can it do any harm." When the saying has been repeated a number of times, we adopt and make our own the practice which it justifies. Then the practice reacts in its turn upon the mental attitude; and quite well-balanced individuals are no longer perfectly sure that there is no danger lurking in the act of lighting three cigarettes with one match. And this vague dread they transfer from the battle-front, where it is reasonable enough, to drawing-rooms where it has no meaning whatsoever.

I have shown elsewhere[1] how individuals, initiated into scientific methods, to some extent at all events, and accustomed always to take for granted in phenomena the operation of purely natural laws, suddenly forget in certain circumstances the whole of their culture and descend to the rank of fetishists of the great tropical forests.

[1] *Psychologie de la Conversion* . . . vol. i. p. 256.

Monaco, and all other gambling resorts in this civilized Europe of ours, are stupendous markets of fetishists. Nor must we hesitate to consider these facts in relation to the disintegration of spiritual energy which inevitably takes place in these abnormal atmospheres. The gambler boasts that it is the attraction of risk that seduces him, but he flatters himself without thinking. The seduction of danger, which certain men really feel and of which they are right in being proud, bears no relation to the motives that impel the gambler. The attraction is often due to the expected joy of triumph, the wild excitement of resolve, the pride of self-conscious power. Baldwin, the explorer, just after being flung to the ground by a lion, wonders why man risks his life without having the slightest interest in doing so : " All I can say," he replies, " is that one finds in victory an inner satisfaction which makes it worth while running all risks, even when there is no one at hand to applaud."

At bottom, the delight in struggle and combat is that of feeling oneself to be valiant and powerful. The true gambler knows nothing like it; he despises chess and whist—anything that calls for attention and effort. What he must have is a succession of rapid shocks : the largest number possible in the fewest number of minutes. He will refuse to reflect because it involves loss of time. Instead of developing, he acquiesces. Now, there is a morbid kind of pleasure connected with this shrinkage of one's being. Instead of wishing to triumph over circumstances by patience and reason, the gambler submits to them, he consents to be dominated and led by events. He experiences the delightful and distressing intoxication of violent excitement. Or rather he is beset by that strange feeling spoken of by those who have just

escaped drowning. At the moment when asphyxia begins, a state of irresistible bliss takes possession of the wretched individual tossed about by the waves; it seems to him that he is being lovingly rocked by that which is killing him; he finds it sweet to be tossed about and overpowered. The gambler, also, soon has all his powers warped by the emotions that shatter them. No longer has he the slightest power of resistence, he is subdued by a nameless force, and this so effectively that he can no longer forego his martyrdom. As the exercise of reason is suspended in him, the imagination indulges in every kind of prank. He is a prey to the most insensate beliefs, and will put his faith in amulets, in formulas, and in the most fortuitous coincidences.[1]

The psychology of the gambler casts a strong light upon the mental state which gives birth to magical super-

[1] This disorganization of the reasoning faculties, and the rebirth of all kinds of credulities and superstitions are clearly seen in people who go mad on public lotteries. Here the exploiters of a fevered *naïveté* carry on a cynical trade, living by the sale of "sure tips" to the public. The most extraordinary advertisements appeal to a public ready to believe anything. In a keenly intelligent race that produces numbers of true scientists and scholars, there have been witnessed such facts as the following, related by Mr. Marcellin Pellet in his *Naples contemporaine* (1894, p. 480): "Here we have a professor of the Kabala offering a two or a trey for 2 francs, 1 franc or 1 franc 50, with a wealth of algebraical formulae and equations. Another promises eight quaternaries, one for each drawing of the *royaume*, in return for 30 francs, cost of the subscription to his paper *Le Bulletin mathématique hebdomadaire*. The Reverend Father Ludovic Carelli promises all his clients a sure gain of 12,300 francs: 'On my conscience and my dignity as a monk' he says, 'I could not bear that you should not become enriched.' Many of these advertisements are illustrated with rude engravings on wood. In *Le Testament du mort*, a dying man is seen in bed, his hand holding a thick envelope, fastened with five seals, which he offers to a person who is wiping his eyes with a large handkerchief. 'After my death,' says the dying man, 'I wish to enrich the world!' The classic puff is that of the *Capucin martyrisé*, who is seen burning to death on a funeral pile. This is the sad story of a monk burnt alive in Naples, in the year 1688, by order of the Spanish viceroy, for telling the people beforehand the treys and quatrenaries which he had discovered in an old arithmetic book. The monk's notebook was found in an iron casket when the district near the lower harbour was being demolished. The book has retained its former virtues. To be convinced of the fact one need only send two francs to the present owner."

stitions. To diminish the importance of this psychology, it will perhaps be alleged that, when seating himself at the roulette or the baccarat table, the gambler, whose reason is on the point of succumbing to the suggestion of an encroaching passion, enters an environment where illogical beliefs and absurd practices have always been predominant. No sooner does he arrive, than he is subjected to the enveloping influence of all that is accepted, proclaimed, and practised by the circle that welcomes him. He passively yields to the suggestions of a kind of new society into which he is admitted. Is not that which we think we can explain by analysing an individual attitude simply the effect of a collective attitude?[1] Certainly, there is some element of truth in this interpretation of the fact, but this element of truth is of the smallest and is far from having the importance it is supposed to have. Yes, indeed, the gambler is very quickly fashioned by the environment to which he belongs. But why does this phenomenon come about with such startling rapidity, and why is it so general? Why does the new environment exercise so constraining an influence? Why does an individual whom even the most ordinary culture raises infinitely above a native of the African or Oceanian bush not offer a stouter resistance to this stranglehold of the unreasonable; why does he begin, without further resistance, to behave like a Kanaka or a Pahouin? "The reasons that long ago produced a belief," wrote Guyau, "are most often those which uphold it at the present time." We may turn this formula round about, and say as follows: "The reasons that uphold a belief at the present time are still, as a rule, those that produced it long

[1] This objection is urged by M. Piaget in an article of the *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, 1926.

ago." If the gambler, when sitting down at a Monte Carlo table, so eagerly and unresistingly adopts the superstitions prevalent in these surroundings, does not this very docility of his confront us with a problem? Is there not something that prepares and predisposes—even forces—him to accept without criticism what a collectivity teaches him? Would social suggestion thus work in him so powerfully without an auto-suggestion arising out of his inmost being and handing him over defenceless to the assaults of his environment? That which causes him to appeal to magical forces, that which has at all times called forth the same appeal in thousands of other men and holds sway throughout an entire body of human beings, is that which first manifests itself in certain individuals. It is quite evident that, in the long run, an atmosphere has been created, that the individual cannot even breathe with impunity. Environment urges him to accept without dispute that which, if left to himself, he would perhaps reject as absurd. The very fact that a belief has become collective gives it great power. It would be quite wrong to disregard the influence of this phenomenon. All the same, the origin of the phenomenon itself is to be found in the individual consciousness.

It is not only in the gambling-hall, where a person abjures reason and becomes enslaved to a passion, that these beliefs are rampant. That they may disappear, it is not sufficient to leave the poisoned environment. They continue to act, even on returning to a semi-normal life. At Nice, in 1925, a missionary exhibition had been organized. Naturally there were on view numbers of fetishes obtained from various mission fields, especially those of Africa. Many visitors were greatly excited at finding themselves confronted with objects made by authentic

fetishists. Was there not every probability that these objects would possess qualities far more efficacious than those which could be purchased in ordinary shops? And indeed, many of these visitors shamelessly offered to pay excessive prices for luck-bringers claimed to be really powerful. It goes without saying that their offers were met with an absolute refusal. So great was their disappointment that it almost drove them to acts of the most discreditable kind and altogether unconnected with their ordinary life. A very careful watch had to be kept over the coveted fetishes to prevent them from being stolen. And what clearly proves that such passions are not absent from numbers of people who do not acknowledge them, is the fact that similar attempts to purchase were made, not only in Nice, but in various other towns—Bordeaux, Rouen, etc., where this exhibition was held.

II

This is not the place to explain in detail what we regard as the origin of the belief in magic. To summarize the matter in a single phrase: what so many anthropologists regard solely as associations of ideas, we think that we ought to consider as associations of emotions. The inter-play of affective phenomena, instead of rousing the critical spirit, prevents it from making its appearance and from taking effect. In the inner life it produces a kind of irresistible impulse. At the starting point of everything is desire, a craving which dominates the whole being. Man is possessed by a passion. Inwardly and with all his might he strains after its realization. That which is within him is a violent longing. This he expresses first of all by his attitude and his gestures, thus suggesting the move-

ments whereby the object of his desire is to be pursued. He also expresses it by his utterance, even though the sounds he makes are but imitative; and it appears to him that by this means he is aiding the accomplishment of the thing he ardently desires. The magic of gesture and of verbal expression speedily culminates in imitative magic. These assertions contain the essence of the theory we have dealt with in greater detail in another work.[1] We shall not return to analyses in which, at the present time, we do not think there is anything to change. But it is now imperative for us to supplement them.

Too great insistence could not be placed on the links that exist between the three kinds of magic. Look at men when they are playing a game of bowls. After taking careful aim, one of them sends the bowl along the turf. He keeps his eyes fixed on it, as though there were in his look some force that directed it. In proportion as it approaches its goal, he leans forward to help it, if one dare say it, to reach the jack, and if it looks as though it must miss, he inclines sideways as though making an effort to bring it back to the right track. He behaves as if his muscular tension were bound to influence the bowl, once it has left his hand. Quite certainly this bowler has neither examined his attitude nor the movements it involves. He does not even suspect what he is doing. He acts unconsciously. If his attention were called to his gesture, he would smile; but this is owing to mental habits which are peculiar to him, to the rational sense of the absurd which would immediately enter his

[1] Cf. *Psychologie de la Conversion*, vol. i. pp. 263-266. We are inclined to adopt the psychological explanations which M. R. Marett has so ingeniously developed in his book: *The Threshold of Religion*, London, 1909. In particular we would mention the review which Father Bouvier gave of it in the *Recherches de Science religieuse*, March-April, 1912, pp. 184-186.

mind. The same gesture, however, carried through with the same passion by a man who has not cultivated the critical faculty and has not even reached the stage of distinguishing precisely between self and not-self, will readily end by becoming an habitual practice, and the habitual practice, having become conscious, will develop into a belief.

A few months ago some travellers, with whom I am well acquainted, were motoring down the Val Ferret, in the direction of Courmayeur. Suddenly, they discovered that they had no more petrol, and were some miles distant from the spot where they could obtain a fresh supply. Fortunately the slope was fairly—though not too—steep, and the car, after a vigorous push, went along of itself. It proceeded quite normally. From time to time, however, there was a slight ridge to be negotiated; then the car was allowed to descend at maximum speed and the dreaded uphill journey began. Gradually the car slowed down; its occupants wondered if it would reach the top. They then concentrated their whole energy, and made an effort similar to that which would have been needed for raising, shoving or dragging it along. Not one of the travellers was under the illusion that he was really helping the engine, but not one of them could have lazily abandoned himself to the swing of the car as it rolled along with its useless motor, and each occupant felt the necessity —which was stronger than he was—of making those utterly ineffectual muscular efforts.

Nor are such facts exceptional. "On a racecourse," remarks M. Henri Delacroix, "not only at the exciting moment when the horses reach the winning post, but throughout the varied fortunes of the race, the spectators encourage, by shouting and waving their arms, the horse

they have backed. Momentarily, indeed, they so identify themselves with the efforts of the horse that their shouts and gestures may be said to be more than acts of encouragement; for the time being they race with their horse, carrying him past the winning-post, as does the jockey. They are jockey, horse, and racecourse all in one; the violence of their desire gives them the impression of power; for an instant there is in their mind a shadowy idea that they are contributing to the horse's success. They are on the very threshold of magic."[1]

Other aspects of human nature are doubtless to be considered. Without incurring the charge of what is called anti-intellectualism, we agree with M. Bergson that, in its first stages, the intellect does not so much aim at settling theoretical problems as at answering practical questions. It is with a view to action, that is to say, to arriving at results, that man began to study things. We are justified in asking ourselves if he is not constantly carrying about and radiating a preoccupation of this kind. He is less inclined to seek out the real nature of things than to discover what purpose they can serve. Thus he is induced to think that everything that manifests itself to him must affect the ordinary course of his life and influence the events that befall him. A comet appears within his vision: he will not be eager to know what it is in itself, but he will insist on guessing why it makes its appearance. And as he is inclined to refer everything to himself, he will be eager to discover what message this comet has for him. If we combine this tendency with the emotion which overcomes him in some particular circumstance, we shall note that the emotion prevents him from trying to find any proportion between the fact,

[1] *La religion et la foi*, pp. 42-43.

whether great or insignificant, that befalls him, and the pre-occupation, the fear or the hope, that dominates him.

III

And here comes in another law, which Father Roure rightly mentions: the law of least effort. We must be careful, along with Th. Ribot, not to mistake this law for economy of effort. This latter directly aids in constituting science; it also results therefrom. Economy of effort leads to an alleviation and a rational simplification of mental toil. The law of least effort, on the contrary, is the tendency to idleness. "This tendency," Ribot well says, "has its end in itself. Its ideal is rest, and its results are negative; the law of economy is a means for the simplification of work, and its results are positive." This disastrous tendency is but too deeply rooted in man. "When the necessities of existence," says Ferrero, "compel him to set his brain working, man always seeks to do as little as possible; to employ the psychological method which gives him least fatigue. In a word, man seeks to solve the problem of existence by the means which can most readily be found, without much work, even if the remedy is fleeting, even if it complicates the evil it was intended to dispel."[1]

It is easy to see how this law here operates. Man feels that he is surrounded by many and mysterious forces. He is at grips with problems whose solution he does not guess, and whose data he does not even distinguish; the facts, in the midst of which he is grievously tossed about,

[1] On this subject see the article by G. Ferrero: "l'Inertie mentale et la loi du moindre effort," in the *Revue Philosophique*, 1894, vol. i. p. 169. This article has been reprinted by the author, along with the controversy which followed, in his book: *Lois psychologiques du symbolisme*, Paris, 1895.

elude his investigation. Amid the quicksands of circumstances which appear to make sport of him, and of hypotheses which are daily being proved false, he experiences a sort of exasperation. As Father Roure says, he wants to find something material to rest upon, a tangible surface on which to lean. This need gives rise to a belief which supplies that needed support, a halting place in the moving panorama of ideas. Suppose I am in the army, and a war is on. Whether I confess the fact to myself or not, I wonder if I shall be killed. This is a thought which cannot help crossing my mind. Now, I hear it said all around that I run a great risk of being killed if I have in my pocket a seven-bladed penknife, or if, on meeting a hunchback or a bandy-legged man, I have not spat three times on the ground. Again, I am quite seriously assured that I have every chance of escaping death if I have faithfully followed the prescriptions of the prayer chain, if I am supplied with a medal bearing the image of some particular saint and the number 13, if I have on my person the letter written by the holy Virgin at the city of Messina, if I wear on my finger a ring made of a nail, or a ring of wood, and on my watch chain a small metal pig. "Here is something quite simple," says Father Roure, "something that sets the mind at rest with little trouble, doing away with endless investigations and questionings. We must have assurances, answers to our doubts. When the nature of things denies them to man, since the latter's nature is to affirm, he procures them for himself by the fictions he creates."[1]

We continually need to come to a decision, to make up our mind. Will every resolve be the result of deliberation, made in accordance with strict reasoning, from

[1] *Au pays de l'Occultisme*, pp. 234-335.

well criticized data? It must be acknowledged that the mind will find this very tiring. Doubtless it will not admit it, but will readily content itself with superficial reasons. It will base its decisions upon some motive which, in cold blood, it might find absurd. But, as it happens, this decision has no disastrous consequence for the mind. The absurd motive profits by this fact. The individual imparts to others that which removed his own doubt. Others thus accept what he tells them, and the irrational idea, accepted by a certain number of men, is endued, as a result, with a value which continues to be illusory but which finds itself singularly enhanced.

In many cases, the decision is left to some circumstance which arises, apart from the will. Business men relate that, happening to be considerably embarrassed, not knowing whether they should strike some particular bargain, they have had recourse to what strangely resembled the experiment of drawing the shortest straw. "If the person to whose house I am now going is in, I shall unhesitatingly conclude the bargain. If he is out, I shall make no attempt to see him again. Nothing further will be done." I know a man personally who, having to make a decision affecting the whole of his future career —let us say that he had to accept or refuse an important engagement abroad — was unable to decide whether it was his duty to start a legal career in his own country or to serve it far away. Being strongly tempted to reject the invitation he had received, he decided not to leave but to settle down for good in his native town. He took rooms, furnished them, placed a notice on his door stating that he would see his clients from ten o'clock until noon. Evidently he had not made up his mind even then, for while waiting from ten o'clock

for problematical clients, he decided that he would take his "orders" according to the events of the morning. As no one had rung his bell up to noon, the lawyer accepted the call he had received to go abroad.

There are hosts of cases in which it is practically impossible to foretell how things will turn out. For instance the necessity of making up one's mind often presents itself in war time. It arises unexpectedly, without the individual having been able to adapt himself to the circumstances. It brings him to bay, forcing him to reach a decision and that without delay. Now, the individual thus confronted with the disconcerting array of facts is, from the moral and intellectual point of view, in an altogether abnormal situation, excellently described by Father Roure as follows: "Moreover, the spring of energy, by dint of having been bent, will now be relaxed. A certain machine-like element has found its way into the person's habits. The determinations of the will, also, tend to become mechanical, they will become relaxed in one direction or another according to the pressure of some material fact. The will must not be expected to intervene spontaneously and deliberately. It has no longer the strength to order the reason to examine the direction to be taken, ready to follow the direction judged to be the most reasonable. And then, on every side we see how apparently the wisest prevision has been falsified and how the maddest audacity has succeeded. What is the use of reflecting? Is it not best to give up the struggle, to place oneself at the mercy of an incident of which one is not the author, and so decline all responsibility for the final event? Father Gemelli quotes the case of artillery men on reaching a cross-way. Which path shall they take? It will be that of which they

thought in the first instance, or that on which they perceive some particular object." [1]

Dealing with this matter, a friend of mine told me in confidence of a mental habit which is stronger in him than anything else. He cannot see a railway time-table open at any page—one that he has not chosen—without asking himself: "Will there be on this page the names of three, four, or five towns where I have been?" If he finds this number of towns he experiences a sense of satisfaction. But if the page happens to contain no single town where he has ever been, he feels somewhat uneasy. Not that he has really consulted fate with regard to some particular object, but the emotional phenomenon that takes place within him is almost exactly identical with that which would come about if he really had consulted fate. He adds that it is not on this occasion only that he experiences this emotional phenomenon. He feels it in a great number of forms, having, as it were, a disposition to make a kind of bet with himself as regards everything, and being somewhat perturbed when he loses his bet. Note that this man allows himself to be in no way dominated by impressions of this kind, that it is a sort of game, in which he takes pleasure without attaching the slightest importance to it or believing in the least that events will be determined by these chance happenings, that he is a scientist in the strictest meaning of the term, and that he confides this to me as an explanation how, in his opinion, there wells up quite naturally in man an impulse of spontaneous fatalism, of confidence in that which transcends personal reflection and the human will.

[1] *Au pays de l'Occultisme*, p. 340. How can one help thinking of numerous practices in Africa . . . and other lands? A hen, for instance, is placed on a number of eggs, and a certain decision will be made according as the majority of the chicks hatched are male or female (R. Milligan, *A l'Œuvre*, July-August, 1920, p. 38).

In all cases of this kind we observe an association between the idea of what one proposes to do and the success of another act which bears no relation to that one has in mind. Why does this association come about?

Note, first of all, that events seem to occur in series. Truth to tell, this is not invariably the case; indeed, it is far from being so. Still, whereas isolated happenings interest us only through their real content, because of their actual importance, those that form part of a sequence strike our attention also by reason of their very succession. A person who is not a great letter writer, on receiving one letter in the course of the day concerns himself only with the information thus conveyed to him. If though scarcely ever receiving one he receives two, each of them will doubtless prove interesting in itself, but he will, in addition, be struck by the unexpected arrival of two letters. He will say to himself: "What a lot of letters in one day!" And it will seem quite natural that the series should not stop, and that, during this day when the post has been more than usually kind to him, he should receive a third letter. Hence the probable origin of the saying: "Never two without three." The psychological origin of this is to be found in the kind of expectation evoked by the repetition of an event. It is not difficult to imagine instances in which an emotional state is added on to the mere succession of phenomena. A person is disturbed once by a telephone call during his meal. This does not unduly move him. No sooner has he sat down again than he is disturbed a second time. This is decidedly becoming a nuisance; if only no third call follows. And he mutters to himself: "Oh! it's bound to come!" Here, the "never two without three" is suggested by dread of the third disturbance. Let us substitute for an

incident of this kind, unimportant in itself, a real misfortune immediately followed by a second. This time the emotion is far more intense and the well-known proverb will come to one's mind: "It never rains but it pours." Moreover, the same remark may be suggested by many happy events coming together or following rapidly on the heels of one another.

In the various series just considered, the happenings are of the same order. But can the same be said if I have to connect a contemplated act, the difficulty of which troubles me, with another act which, of itself, has no importance whatsoever for me? There seems no need to give up the attempt. A man tells me that when he is out in the street and preoccupied, about something, he walks, without thinking, on the edge of the footpath, and takes care not to step on the interstices of the flags that form their edge. Should he come to the end of the path, having done this successfully, he feels a certain sense of satisfaction, not intense in itself and meaning nothing to him. All the same, this petty satisfaction does really exist.[1] The same feeling comes about if, by a kind of mental pastime, the idea enters his head to reach the end of the footpath after an odd or an even number of steps. The satisfaction experienced—or the contrary of this satisfaction—coincides with his preoccupied state of mind. It colours this preoccupation in a certain way, and, in fortunate cases, mitigates it.[2] It seems as though

[1] A cultured and highly intellectual man, who had acquired the mania of making this experiment, went so far that, if he actually did step on the interstices of the flags, he abandoned the idea of lunching with a friend whose invitation he had accepted. The inhibition was absolute.

[2] This method of consulting chance is more widespread than is imagined. Many people have confided in me. A very distinguished man tells me that when in his youth, he was about to undergo an examination, he noticed on his path a tree and said to himself: "If I reach that tree in an even number of steps, I

failures and successes must constitute series: will not success in what was no more than a mental pastime continue into the more serious step he is about to take? This is what makes a kind of bridge between actions which, in reality, have no connection with one another, and gives rise to the idea of a half serious, half-playful method of, so to speak, interrogating the future. The kind of wager one makes with oneself has no definite object in view. It is what might be called an experiment "for finding out." In a matter of no importance, you want "to find out" whether you will have any luck or not. Automatically the information is transferred to another domain. An association is set up between the success of an act carried out with the sole object of discovering whether one would fail or not, and the idea of what one really purposes to do. Success in one case affords the hope that it will be reproduced in the act contemplated. One surmises a connection which must not be broken, and hence comes the idea that failure produces failure, and that success likewise produces success.

Associations of this kind depend more strictly upon the emotional condition of the subject. Even a vague anxiety encourages and makes them almost irresistible. The fact is that, in certain cases, they help the individual to recover what he most lacks—his mental equilibrium. Every success facilitates the restoration of this balance, every failure imperils it. M. Piaget quotes the case of a lecturer who, shortly before addressing his audience and

shall pass; if in an odd number, it will be a bad sign." He adds, moreover, with a smile, that he took pains slightly to lengthen or shorten his strides, with the idea of correcting chance as far as he could. If, notwithstanding this, the number of steps was not what he wanted, he was greatly perturbed. So far as he could remember he did not associate any religious idea with this act, or ask God by this means to give him a sign.

not being altogether free from apprehension, was taking his usual walk: "On arriving near the place where he was accustomed to stop, he was about to retrace his steps before having reached the exact spot, when he felt compelled to go right to the end, fifty metres farther, in order to ensure the success of the lecture, as if a shortening of his walk were liable to spoil his luck."[1]

The dread lest some particular event may take place compromises that mental equilibrium which is necessary for the performance of something difficult. An anxious man, therefore, will do anything to remove this dangerous fear. A relationship is set up between the image of what he dreads and his effort to remove this fear; owing to a confusion of ideas he thinks the effort to remove the fear will prevent the thing he dreads. "One Sunday afternoon," remarked a very intelligent woman, "when descending the Eiffel Tower in the lift—which was packed with people—I suddenly began to think of the consequences if an accident were to dash the lift and its human freight into space. Terrified that such a thought had entered my head, and *dreading lest it might cause that very accident*, I began vigorously to repel it, and did not recover my peace of mind until I considered it sufficiently remote from my mind to prevent all danger. Similar fears still beset me, though less strongly, in connection with the chimney being on fire for instance, a calamity which I take care not to bring about by thinking of it."[2]

[1] J. Piaget, *La représentation du Monde chez l'enfant*, p. 152.

[2] Cf. *op. cit.* pp. 152-153. It is to these mental conditions, so familiar that they are not even noticed, that must be attributed the origin of much of the talk one hears everywhere. This is what happens when, at a meeting, an individual who ought to be there does not arrive in time. Someone nearly always says: "Let us begin without him; that will make him come." The same thing is said when waiting for a late guest at a dinner: "Let us take our places, to make him come."

Do we not know people who, keenly desirous that the weather shall be fine, will refrain, in spite of lowering clouds, from taking an umbrella, for fear lest they seem to imagine that it will rain, and so cause the rain to fall? Others, on the contrary, will take their umbrellas with them, under the idea that the threatening downpour will be mischievous enough to render their action useless. And one of the origins of these irrational practices is simply the recollection of emotions experienced: at one time the annoyance of having taken an umbrella and having been needlessly prudent, at another that of having anticipated fine weather and caught the downpour. Is there any great difference between all these spontaneous practices and the idea that we are haunted by some spirit of teasing mischief that plays us tricks? Animism is on our track.

IV

It appears as though we had now reached the very threshold of magic. Is it possible to go further and attempt to cross this threshold? A series of definite observations invites us to take this step. Here are two. "When walking along a flagged pavement," says a very *distinguée* young lady to me, "if I am able, without altering my usual pace, to kick a small stone on to a flag mentally fixed upon beforehand, and the stone rolls to the very spot at which I had aimed, I see in the fact a good omen. If, when crossing a street and a motor-car is approaching, I can reach the opposite footpath without the car having overtaken me, I also conclude that the matter in the success of which I am interested will turn out well—or that my day will be a pleasant one." Another lady tells me of the experiment she scarcely ever fails to make whenever

she finds herself in difficult or embarrassing circumstances: She lights a gas warmer, then, with the match she has just been using, she attempts to light a spirit lamp some distance away. If the match goes out before this has been successfully achieved, the state of disquiet continues; if the lamp is lit, her uneasiness is replaced by mental tranquillity.

The two ladies in question are perfectly well-balanced individuals. They show no signs of suffering from psychasthenia, both bear heavy family, even social, responsibilities, are trustworthy advisers, and have on all around a great and even soothing influence. These two incidents, however, of which they told me, have led me to wonder if, in other individuals far less advanced morally and intellectually, that which in them is exceptional—and is probably so in many other normal persons—does not take place far more frequently and with great intensity. Would it not be possible to find, in cases where psychasthenia actually exists or is threatening, acts that are genuine obsessions and that assume the aspect of rites which it is impossible to neglect?

May not the starting point of magic dwell in the precautionary spasmodic movements observed in patients, at some or other stage of their illness? For instance, we have the case of a priest, who is intelligent and cultured, but suffering from moral depression. He consults a doctor, who carefully questions him upon all the symptoms of his malady and finally discovers a habit which the priest had not mentioned at first, so unimportant had it seemed to him. This patient is unable, when he comes across a hole of any size in the street, to prevent himself from feeling a sort of physical uneasiness, from which he regularly frees himself by walking round the hole three

times.[1] In other patients, this phenomenon may assume the most varied aspects. But in all cases there is greater or less anxiety which the individual ends by doing something three, seven, or nine times. What is the reason of the part played by these figures, 3, 7, and 9, so often found in magical operations? What are the mysterious causes for its spontaneous appearance in acts that have certainly not been suggested by any tradition, and which the individual has re-invented on his own account?

Should we not compare with the dread of having to deal with occult powers the irresistible aversion felt by certain patients to touching door handles? Many hypotheses have been advanced to explain this phenomenon, which varies between simple hesitation before a door to be opened and the utter impossibility of making the necessary action.[2] How can one help also observing the dread or repulsion felt by so many subjects in the presence of knives or bodkins pointed at them? Confronted with the phenomena of inhibition or with others inspired by this kind of pious horror, how can one help thinking of numerous facts encountered everywhere? "There is a priestly king to the north of Zengwih, in Burma, revered by the Sotihs as the highest spiritual and temporal authority, into whose house no weapon or cutting instrument may be brought. This rule may perhaps be

[1] See the story of this priest in the book which Dr J. Vinchon has written in collaboration with Maître M. Garçon: *Le Diable, étude historique, critique et médicale*, pp. 205-206.

[2] Certain patients manage to open a door by using their handkerchief or putting on gloves. A medical man, who suffers from this obsession, without appearing to do so, takes his apron to touch the door handles. With such facts before us, we wonder if this kind of taboo is not caused by dread of contagion, which is a well known mania. A simple fact, however, mentioned by Dr. Vinchon, proves clearly that in most cases this is not the true explanation: many persons afflicted by this taboo are not at all afraid of disease or contagion. The two classes of inhibition do not overlap.

explained by a custom observed by various peoples after a death; they refrain from the use of sharp instruments so long as the ghost of the deceased is supposed to be near, lest they should wound it. . . . After a death the Roumanians of Transylvania are careful not to leave a knife lying with a sharp edge uppermost so long as the corpse remains in the house 'or else the soul will be forced to ride on the blade.' For seven days after a death, the corpse being still in the house, the Chinese abstain from the use of knives and needles, and even of chopsticks, eating their food with their fingers. . . . The Innuit hunter, who has had a hand in the killing of a white whale . . . is not allowed to do any work for the next four days, that being the time during which the shade or ghost of the whale is supposed to stay with its body. At the same time, no one in the village may use any sharp or pointed instrument for fear of wounding the whale's shade, which is believed to be hovering invisible in the neighbourhood. Whoever cuts a whale's body with an iron axe will die. Indeed, use of all iron instruments is forbidden in the village during these four days."[1]

I will quote one more example of precautionary spasmodic movements, with reference to a doctor whom it would be absurd to regard as ill. He is a prominent member of his profession and is in great demand by his colleagues for consultation purposes. This man is very far-sighted and his critical faculties are well developed. Now, ever since he was a boy, he has had the habit of performing a certain action without which he would not be altogether himself, would not feel possessed of his mental powers and would be unable to make up his mind about anything. Once this action has been performed

[1] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. iii. pp. 278-279.

he is free from all mental discomfort. He must touch with his hand in a certain way—by pressing against the door frame first the palm, or rather the ball of the thumb, and then the fingers. He would never enter a sick room without going through this kind of rite. One day, when he felt anxious about a clinical case, one of his confrères saw him leave the room under some pretext or other and touch the door-frame, without giving the impression that he was doing so. Immediately he recovered his mental alertness and acumen. If this doctor had been afflicted with psychasthenia one can guess the importance this rite would have had for him.

Here is a case in which this malady is well developed. The subject of it is a fine fellow, sixty-three years of age, of a fidgety and conscientious disposition. As a result of overwork this side of his character became accentuated. "He feels," says Pierre Janet, "that he needs to be reassured, and, with this object in view, thinks it sufficient if he distinctly pronounces a certain sentence. This sentence, for the time being, runs as follows: 'Mustn't pay attention, let's have dinner, we'll see after.' This seems a very simple phrase. He is convinced that he would be cured, if he could utter it perfectly a single time, but it would have to be said distinctly, carefully, and convincingly, and the poor fellow is always haunted by the feeling that he has not said it properly, that he has not been reassured, has not had sufficient faith, in what he was saying. He does not confine himself to repeating the ritual phrase over and over again. He seeks to vary the conditions under which he says it, in order to reach perfection; he goes into a corner of his room, first sitting, then standing, then kneeling; he goes down into the cellar, sometines carrying a light, sometimes in the dark.

He forces his wife to accompany him, to listen whether he is saying the phrase properly, or to utter it simultaneously with himself. Then he solemnly articulates the words 'Mustn't pay attention, let's have dinner, we'll see after,' and again climbs the stairs, though in despair; for, in spite of his wife assuring him that he pronounced the words perfectly, he has not felt that they were well spoken."[1] Is it absurd to suppose that here we have the origin of the confidence reposed in ceremonial words for the recovery of one's mental balance?

Other patients are possessed with a mania for omens, oaths, and pacts. Sometimes a striking event or something they are doing acquires a prophetic quality: "If I touch this object," says a woman patient, "my mother will succumb to her illness." "If I skip this word," says the same woman when reading, "it will be an evil action, and I shall be punished for it: misfortune will befall my sisters, and all on account of me." Sometimes these patients promise themselves that they will do something in order to make themselves capable of doing something else.[2] "Unless I do my reading over again," says one, "I swear that I will not go out with my sister this afternoon." This mania may assume every imaginable form. After all, it amounts to the necessity of regarding an action in which one succeeds or to which one submits as the sign of events which one must expect, or the power to accomplish that which, wrongly or rightly, seems difficult. In the former case, it is really the outline of a method of divination, of an augural sign; in the latter, it is the undertaking to do one thing in order to obtain another: how can we help regarding these as the primary indications of those rites which, at bottom, are compacts?

[1] Pierre Janet, *Les Obsessions de la Psychasthénie*, vol. ii. pp. 311-312.
[2] Pierre Janet *op. cit.* pp. 325-326.

These patients have recourse to defensive methods which are mostly directly related in kind to the obsession from which they suffer. This has been proved by Pitres and Régis. The latter finds it mainly among those obsessed by a temptation to sacrilege or by some scruple. "With such people," he says, "every obsessing temptation is opposed by a swift and antagonistic gesture of piety (signs of the cross, genuflexions, mental or verbal prayers, etc.). At other times, the action is a generally defensive one, vaguely applicable to all obsessions; for instance, a strong sign of repudiation, a frown, a wink, a twisting of the lips, whistling, expectoration, snapping the fingers, tapping the foot, the repetition of a word or a figure, the object being to secure immunity. These actions are not altogether involuntary, and, strictly speaking, could not all be classed as spasmodic tics. Still, apart from the fact that most of them are spontaneous and automatic, the rest, though perhaps deliberate at the beginning, cease to be so, after a shorter or longer period of time, by their very repetition."[1]

The facts just related, which are observed in the case of those suffering from obsessions, are not complicated. They are of the same nature, though singularly more detailed in those afflicted with the mania for persecution. Here the means of defence become far more varied and complex. There is only the embarrassment of choice. Note the method employed by a person who regards himself as pursued by the devil. To rid oneself of him, Dr. Vinchon tells me, and reduce him to a kind of impotence, the devil's portrait is made, though not anyhow: the image is embroidered on a piece of cloth. The per-

[1] E. Régis, *Précis de Psychiatrie*, 5th edition, p. 160. Cf. P. Janet, *Les obsessions et la Psychasthénie*, vol. ii. pp. 474-487. See also Bellet, *Moyens de défense et Psychothérapie dans les obsessions* (*Thèse*, Bordeaux, 1898).

secuted individual has the impression that by fixing the image in thread, movement on the part of the original is made impossible, and so there is protection from persecution at his hands. Unfortunately the protection is only momentary; but when the persecution is resumed, recourse is again had to the same system of defence. Others, who are obsessed by the image of the black mass, set themselves free, momentarily at all events, by sketching the scene, the vision of which is haunting them. Others, and these are mostly women, make themselves a little doll which they hide under their clothes and carry about as a protecting fetish. Others, finally, have recourse, now to words which they repeat or to actions which they perform, now to both words and actions at once. When they employ the spoken language, the word —or collection of words—assumes in their mouth the appearance of an exorcism or an incantation, and has the full significance of the latter for the victim. Sometimes it is an exclamation, an oath; occasionally a whole phrase, a kind of formula, that is recited in a certain tone of voice which never varies. A woman patient will repeat without stopping: "Five fives are twenty-five; I am the queen of France Zazi imprisoned in the Salpêtrière." Another contents herself with levelling a hymn at her persecutors, which she sings over and over again. "I noticed," says Séglas, "another patient who, in order to defend himself against his enemies and to place himself in touch with imaginary protectors, would whistle for hours at a stretch a tune which he had himself composed, and which I was able to jot down. This he did while walking in a particular direction."[1]

[1] "Les idées délirantes de défense" in *La Médecine moderne*, August and September, 1891, p. 645.

These patients generally try to discover new and extraordinary turns of speech, putting into everything they say a degree of confidence that is in direct ratio with its strangeness. They delight in arranging words in such a way as to form sentences impossible to understand and which thus assume quite a cabalistic form. They often endeavour—this is the case with onomatomaniacs—to nullify, by repeating certain words, the evil influence which they attribute to certain others. Here is one man who never heard the words: "Friday," "misfortune," "thirteen," without counteracting their effect by uttering other words: "Saturday," "good fortune," "fourteen."

In numerous cases, it is by mimicry that the necessity of defending himself finds expression in the patient. A persecuted mystic protects herself against her imaginary enemies by means of repeated signs of the cross and cabalistic gestures. Another, harassed by a mysterious being whom she names *Ispiritim* and accuses of electrifying her, pricks her skin with a long pin, and places the point of a nail in her ears and mouth and before her eyes. "A persecuted woman whom I noticed," again relates Séglas, "was accustomed each night, before retiring, to remove the bed-clothes. Then she put a plate on the mattress, and on it set a candlestick containing a candle stuck with pins which fell into the plate as the candle burned itself out. The object of this practice was to drive away evil spirits."[1]

That which proves of interest in all these cases is not the study of psychasthenia itself; it is the discovery of an element with which it is almost invariably accompanied; an effort of the subject to free himself from what troubles him. The obsession from which he suffers appears to

[1] *Loc. cit.* p. 646.

him, in some way, as a foreign body that has taken up its abode within himself, one, perhaps, which does not succeed in wholly overrunning him, but which he is unable to expel. He then seeks some means of defence, and the method he thinks of has no other object than to drive out the intruder, or, if preferred, to replace a state of obsession by some other state of consciousness. This is exactly what happens, though on a far larger scale, in the case of the " persecuted." These also begin to rely on a " trick " to drive away that which haunts them. Whether elementary and semi-conscious, or complex and systematic, must not these means of defence be regarded as the origin of many magical rites ? It may be that, in certain cases, they lack informative originality. This happens, for instance, when the individual—perhaps not altogether a rare occurrence—has obtained his means of defence from some conjuring book which he has procured from one or other of those charlatans who swarm around us and keep alive, for their own ends, all sorts of superstitions. But the cases are still more frequent in which these practices reveal no trace of learning nor the influence of any book or tradition. The behaviour of the individual is that of any living being endeavouring to resist the causes that weaken and destroy him, and above all that cause him suffering. He then himself invents the methods to which he has recourse. And in his case we witness the birth —or rather the rediscovery—of methods which continually reappear, millenium after millenium. One of the origins of magic would seem to lie in those mental functions, deviations of which are studied by psychiatrists. It is revealed to us in and through the malady which, Ribot informs us, is " an experimentation of the subtlest order, instituted by nature herself in well defined circum-

stances and by processes which human art has not got at its disposal."

v

This mania in adults for omens and compacts which we have just been describing, was found by M. Pierre Janet in a child of twelve: "She appears," he says, "to have simple spasmodic tics: she shakes her head abruptly; she walks slowly, taking care not to step upon the interstices between the flags on the pavement. These tics, however, are accompanied by various mental ponderings which make her very unhappy. Each one of her gestures is accompanied by a long sequence of thought: 'If she does not shake her head, she will die within a week; if she does not count the flags properly, she will go to hell; if she has looked sideways as she walks along the street, it is a presage of death, etc.'" Such a case as this makes us wonder if what we have attempted to analyse in the adult is not actually existent germinally in the child, and whether, in studying the origins of magic, attention should not be paid to that which is faintly outlined in the early years of human existence.

Many psychologists have already dealt with this idea. "Children," remarks M. Leuba, "often amuse themselves by inflicting prohibitions and enforcing them by threats of punishment: 'If you do *that*,' they say, '*this* will happen to you.' As a rule, the *that* and the *this* have no logical connection with each other; the child is not thinking of any particular force or any special agent who would administer punishment. From this point of view, it is important to remember that what some particular person does in a spirit of fun or make-belief is frequently taken seriously by some other person, independently of

all empirical verification. A little girl of seven heard some one say that, if you killed a snail, rain would fall soon afterwards. She at once accepted this statement, and it was impossible, by appealing to her reason, to drive this idea out of her mind. Who knows how many absurd superstitions of the savages come about in the same way! It seems likely that many of the commandments, precautions, and prescriptions which the savage inflicts upon himself have had this origin; indeed, there is often no logical connection whatsoever between forbidden or prescribed acts and the object to be attained."[1]

In 1896, the year in which the first edition of Leuba's work appeared in America, James Sully observed the following interesting fact: a little girl thought that by making her hair tidy she would prevent the wind from blowing. The wind rumpled her hair, from which she concluded that by arranging her hair she could stop the wind.[2] Since the wind whistles, the very fact of whistling is capable of producing the wind?[3]

More recently, M. Jean Piaget thought that we ought to try to discover, in more detailed and systematic fashion, whether the rough outline of what we find in the adult may not exist in the child. It seems a pregnant idea, and the inquiries it will not fail to call forth may likely lead us to curious discoveries. M. Piaget's great merit consists in having applied to this idea his methods of patient observation and experimental investigation. We will examine the problem on our own account.

An association must always inevitably be set up between

[1] *La Psychologie des Phénomènes religieux*, pp. 202-203. Cf. *ibid.* pp. 116-117, 118-119, 121-123.

[2] *Studies of Childhood*, p. 80.

[3] Leuba, *op. cit.* p. 209.

the fact which helps us to will and the act of volition itself. Without noticing it, one comes to take for granted a bond of causality between this fact and the act which follows it. Imperceptibly one gradually acquires confidence in the efficacy of that to which one has appealed for encouragement in order to make up one's mind. This gradual process begins with the child itself. It is not he who can tell us this, but adults distinctly remember what they happened to do in childhood. It is all the more interesting to note this when they relate it with a smile and without attaching the slightest importance to it at the present time. "When I was young," says one person, "in going to school I had to follow a long footpath, ornamented with a lozenge pattern made from little pebbles. I practised passing methodically from one lozenge to another. When I had some particular wish or project on hand, I was more especially careful. And if I reached the end of the path without missing a lozenge, I regarded the fact as a sign of probable success for my wish or project."[1] A lady relates: "When my brother, my sister, and myself were children and took train to Normandy, we never failed to take up our position in the corridor. We vied with one another as to who should be the first to see some particular object: a cow for instance. He or she would be sure to be lucky in any holiday plans that might be made."

Methods employed to reassure oneself may vary considerably. Generally they consist of some action that seems difficult to accomplish. Success then appears as an encouragement. A lady tells me the following recollections of her childhood: "When quite small, I re-

[1] Compare with this experience that related by one of the persons questioned by M. Piaget in *La représentation du Monde chez l'enfant*, pp. 123-124.

member playing games of 'mental wagers,' if I may thus express my meaning. One form these wagers took has remained in my memory. We lived in a house set back from the road from which it was separated by a somewhat large court-yard. When going home, as I emerged from the street, I flung the gate of the court-yard wide open and began to run as fast as I could, saying to myself: 'If I reach the end of the yard before the gate shuts, everything will go well; I shall have good marks, mother will let me read for an hour, etc. On the other hand, if I don't reach it in time, things will go badly with me. I shall have bad marks, I shall fall ill, I shall die, etc.' Long afterwards I was surprised to find that this mental trick was still there, though in a considerably modified form. In attempting to cross a busy street I sometimes *ask* myself: 'Shall I reach that spot before yonder car reaches it?'"

Does it frequently happen that many children nightly experience the fear of death, either their own or that of their parents? This is M. Piaget's opinion, but many doctors whom I have consulted dispute it. It would appear to be a point which merits more thorough investigation. One thing at all events is certain: cases of unreasoning fear in the dark are not infrequent. The causes of this phenomenon are numerous, some of them undoubtedly concern the responsibility for children incurred by those in charge of them. To drive away their fear, many have recourse to one and the same method: "When I had one of those frights," says one witness, "I began to count, having in mind the idea that if I reached some particular figure which I had chosen beforehand before anything happened, I no longer had anything to fear. To reassure myself thoroughly, I

would begin the process several times, and, if it succeeded each time, the sense of terror was dispelled." [1]

Similarly, may not the anthropocentric finalism always found in the adult at the origin of so many beliefs have its starting point, its first manifestation, in the attitude which as a rule the child very willingly assumes towards the world ?

M. Alfred Binet and M. Th. Simon have taught us that children define everything by the use to which it is put ; and M. Piaget has confirmed this view, as the result of the questions he has asked many children. To them the sun " is for warming us," the river " is for giving us water," the rain " is for watering the plants," or " is for cleaning the streets," the wind " is for driving the boats along," or " for making clouds come," etc., etc. The conclusion drawn by M. Piaget from this observation, which he regards as never-failing, is that the combination of this self-centredness with this absolute finalism, leads the child to solve along certain lines the question of origin. He imagines quite naturally that what exists in view of some particular object has been made with the intention of attaining this object. He knows only men who are capable of making objects that have or have not some particular purpose—especially those that have. The wind, for instance, has fans—or bicycle pumps—as its origin. It is also explained by saying : " The wind is a gentleman who blows a great deal." If in the child's eyes the whole of nature is made for us, if nature participates in human activity and finality, it is natural that the question of origin should be solved in an artificialist sense. Nature is made by man to the extent to which it is made for man.

[1] Cf. a similar testimony related by M. Piaget, *op. cit.* p. 122.

This artificialism, on which M. Piaget insists very interestingly, thanks to the finalism by which it is supplemented, casts a somewhat unexpected light upon the anthropocentric preoccupation which is assuredly at the origin of many beliefs found everywhere in mankind, among civilized as well as uncivilized peoples.

VI

Why should we not look to the child for the explanation of a fact which plays an enormous rôle in the history of religions and above all in magical processes, a fact that is also well known to historians and ethnologists, but which, however well known it may be, seems to present a big problem in psychology? We have already noted the importance of words, especially that of names. To possess the name of an object is, many people believe, to be in a condition to act upon and through it. How are we to account for this belief? M. Piaget is right in maintaining that this nominal realism makes its first appearance in the child. We also are of the opinion that it begins there.

It may be that the child at first regards the name as a simple attribute of the thing. He is interested in a newly discovered connection between the thing and the word by which it is designated. But when, pointing to some object, he begins to ask the question: "What's that?" and when, in asking this question, he demands the name of the object to which he points, there appears a new tendency: that of assigning to all reality a symbolical substitute.[1]

[1] It is the impression of the psychologist Stern that the child at first understands that everything has a name, and that he regards this name as something which is a substitute for the thing itself. The objection to this view is that the

A little attentive observation should suffice to convince one that the child, when uttering the name of an object, thinks that he is penetrating into the very essence of that object and is obtaining a real explanation. No sooner is he supplied with the name than he is satisfied. The problem is now, for him, non-existent; there is a close relationship between the name and the thing named. The name reveals the thing. Things have always had their names and each of them has only one. That which has no name is non-existent; it is even inconceivable. "If all that children need to do," says M. Piaget,[1] "is to look at things in order to see their names, we must by no means imagine that they regard the name as being inscribed, as it were, on the thing. What must be said is that, to them, the name forms part of the essence of the thing. . . . But we must at once add that, to these children, the essence of the thing is not a concept, it is the thing itself. There is utter confusion between the thought and the things of which one thinks. The name is consequently in the object, not as a label gummed upon it, but as an invisible characteristic."

In proportion as the child develops, he is no longer interested in individual words, but in those combinations of words which constitute narratives or formulas. A little girl of two and a half is seated at table with her grand-parents. Previous to the meal, the grandfather regularly says grace. The child listens, opening her eyes wide. You feel that she would like to say something.

child, before reaching this stage, begins by looking upon the name rather as an attribute of, than as a substitute for, the thing. This objection of M. Wallon (*Journal de Psychologie*, 1924) is accepted by M. H. Delacroix (*Le langage et la pensée*, p. 286). It seems to us, however, that the objection applies fully during only the very brief period when the child, just learning to speak, has not yet acquired the habit of asking its favourite question on every occasion.

[1] *La Représentation du Monde chez l'enfant*, p. 47.

One day, she can no longer resist the temptation, and asks: "Grandfather, what is that you said in your plate?" The grandfather explains his action in simple and homely language: "When you are given something, you say thanks; I am now thanking Him who gives us this good bread, and gives you yours too." The child listens; it is clear that she understands, but after a few minutes she asks the same question again: "What is it that you said in your plate?" The grandfather explains once more, endeavouring to make his meaning still clearer. Imperturbably the child insists: "What is it that you said in your plate?" The answer to the puzzle is not complicated. The child has understood the explanation given, but that is not sufficient for her: what she wants is the formula, even though she does not understand all the words.

It is clearly in the child, then, that we detect in its rudimentary state the faith that men repose in words, and the importance they attribute to them. But perhaps it is well, for the understanding of what takes place in this little creature who is so often a mystery to us, to note a few characteristics of the adult's intellectual and moral physiognomy. Here is an aphasiac, a victim of the War. He has partially lost the memory of words; more particularly, he no longer knows the names of colours. He recognises quite well that a colour placed before his eyes is "violet-coloured" or "cherry-coloured," but he can say neither *red*, nor *green*, nor *yellow*, etc. These words uttered in his presence awake no memory whatsoever in him. He is requested to point out something yellow. He repeats the word, vainly endeavouring to ascertain what it means. But if he is asked to pick out a "lemon-coloured" object, he finds it, apparently without much

difficulty. Confronted with a packet of worsted threads of various colours, and invited to pick out those of the same shade, though more or less dark, he cannot understand what is being asked of him. He declares that all these colours are different; he cannot distinguish between them. All that he succeeds in doing is to bring together those of the same intensity, although different in shade. "What else does this mean," writes M. Séchehaye, "than that the rôle of words is to allow us to form general ideas for ourselves? They are the basis of associations of ideas and of groupings which we make ourselves or receive ready-made from the community. Red is the sum total of what we are accustomed to call red, and it is by the help of the words we have been able to acquire that we compare and bring together all the red objects that make up our abstract notion of red. If the basis of the words and of the associations of things with the words happens to be lacking, we are bewildered, we no longer see any but particular cases, and our attempts to create new abstracts fail for the most part." This does not mean that the general idea does not exist previous to the word which indicates it. "The word," adds our correspondent, "is the new fact which enables the faculty of ideation to develop its full effect. It is in this sense that the word upholds the idea. It is thus that a first machine, however imperfect, has been the starting-point of mechanical progress. The first locomotive is unimaginable in that shapeless and obscure predecessor. So are our philosophical and scientific ideas when confronted with the first words stammered by men."

But would it be absurd to judge, by the mental disorder that shows itself in a man stricken with aphasia, of the kind of joy which a child experiences—without being

aware of it—when his vocabulary becomes enriched with fresh words? The aphasiac is overwhelmed by the crowd of impressions he is unable to classify. The child has the vague, though potent, feeling, when acquiring words, that he is fathoming and dominating the reality of things.

Is faith in the efficacy of words explained by what has just been said? It does not appear to be so. The importance of words is one thing; faith in the virtue of words is another. Where must we look for its origin? Doubtless in the most primitive experience of cause and effect that the child is enabled to make. Before being able to make anything with his hand, he discovers that he can act by crying. An association is speedily set up between the cries he utters and the arrival of his mother or nurse. At first he cried because he could not do anything else. Soon, however, he cries in order that he may have the sensation afforded by the coming of his mother or his nurse.

This initial experience becomes strangely fixed in proportion as the human being develops. By degrees there comes to light a particular conception of cause and effect, the formation of which has been admirably described by M. Louis Weber: "When, whether by gesture or by word, one man calls to another in the distance and the latter responds to the call, there is nothing apparently material about the causal connection. . . . Gestures and words are agencies the efficacy of which is interpreted by their result alone, *without any perceptible vehicle*. To hit with stone or javelin a hunted animal or enemy is, as it were, to extend the effort of the arm and transmit its movement to a tangible and visible medium. But to call to a companion and see him run up in answer to the call,

is to set working a very different force which the intelligence of the savage cannot translate in terms of matter and movement. As this causality cannot thus be conceived, it introduces into the imagination a new element *sui generis* which cannot be referred to material phenomena, and this element is the spiritual element (that which acts without a body)." [1]

Now we have arrived at the origin of the mysterious importance accorded to gestures, and especially to words. This causality of a certain kind has become so familiar to men that any affirmation or denial seems, in their eyes, to be invested with particular power. Several persons are together; they are dominated by one and the same dread. Each of them is thinking of an event which he fears. He is convinced that the others have exactly the same thought. In expressing what he feels, he would not be afraid of disturbing, in the rest, a security that is non-existent. All the same, he remains silent. It seems to him that by giving expression to the apprehension that troubles him, he would thereby bring about the event of which he is afraid. It is an idea of the same kind that acts in other cases. If a passenger in a railway carriage begins to relate stories of accidents, there will always be one or more persons present who will beg him to stop: "Don't talk of an accident, or you'll make it happen." How many troublesome people there are of whom one avoids talking, lest they suddenly appear! It would seem as though it were enough to mention certain bores to find them standing before you!

It is not only in the ritual of developed magic that the mysterious virtue of words and phrases is to be found. We have but to listen to what is being said all around us,

[1] *Le rythme du progrès*, p. 141.

or even by ourselves, to find the more or less disguised recognition of this virtue.

VII

Just as the child attaches great importance to a name, so he recognises the efficacy of action at a distance. On the one hand, by virtue of the self-centredness already mentioned, he imagines the world as turning around himself. On the other hand, he has not acquired sufficient consciousness of self to enable him to differentiate self from the external world. The reason he imagines that he controls this world is simply because he does not know that it is unconnected with his dreams and desires. He is very far from imagining that there is a self that commands and a not-self that obeys. He simply feels within himself a desire. This he expresses, and then awaits its realization. Hence the illusion he so frequently encounters. He believes, for instance, that the moon follows him, and does so because he wishes it. The fact that he himself moves from place to place, walks and advances, makes him believe that the thing moves from place to place, walks and advances like himself and accompanying himself. He connects the supposed intentions of things with his own intentions. "When I was a little girl," a young lady tells me, "and was playing on the sea shore, I was fully convinced that the sea obeyed my orders. Once I made a mark with my heel on the sand, and said to the waves: 'You will stop there.' When a wave presumed to cross this limit, I was very angry with it." The sociological school gives the name of participation to the links which the child of his own accord sets up between things and himself, or between one thing and another. It matters little what name is

given to these supposed links. Undoubtedly the psychology of the child brings us to the origin of the magical beliefs of the adult. A young lady tells me the following incident of her childhood: "I wanted to have a pretty complexion. Now, some one in my presence had mentioned a lily-and-rose complexion. The idea entered my head to chew rose petals, so that they might transfer their beauty to my complexion. I do not remember having chewed any lilies, but I have still a vivid recollection of the bitter taste of the rose petals. As I was also desirous that my skin should be very soft and velvety, I sought for opportunities of eating peaches, so that this envied quality might become mine." "I have heard a little girl say to her brother," writes Sir John Lubbock, "'if you eat too much goose, you will be quite silly,' and there are perhaps few children to whom the induction would not seem perfectly legitimate."[1]

This spontaneous belief in what will subsequently be called the law of similarity is generally accompanied in the child by an instinctive sense of the value of renunciation, and of its mysterious objective efficacy. "One

[1] Sir John Lubbock, *The Origins of Civilization*, Introduction, p. 20. Cf. Piaget, *op cit.* p. 129. While revising the proofs of this book there is considerable stir about a case of Gipsy cannibalism in Cheko-Slovakia. The perpetrators of the repulsive and atrocious deeds brought to light during the legal examination live a nomadic life in the lonely tracts bordering on Cheko-Slovakia, Hungary and Roumania. "The number of persons arrested," says *Le Temps* (11th March, 1927), "is twenty-six up to the present, twelve men and fourteen women or children. They confess to the perpetration of twelve murders, mostly during 1926. Of these twelve victims, nine (five men and four women), were dismembered and eaten. They complacently explain the way in which they set about killing and cutting up their victims and the different ways in which they dressed their flesh. The superstitious character of their beliefs, so closely akin to the primitive ideas on magic, would make you think you were dealing with African savages. One of the criminals explains, for instance, that it was preferable to give the brain to children, so that they might become more intelligent. Another states that woman's flesh was preferred by young men, who considered that it had a more delicate flavour and imagined that they thereby acquired enhanced powers of seduction."

of my earliest recollections," relates Mlle. V. in an autobiography which she had entrusted to M. Th. Flournoy, "refers to my mother. For weeks she had been very ill in bed, and a servant had told me that she would die in a few days. I must have been four or five years of age. My dearest possession was a small brown wooden horse, covered with 'real hair,' as I then called it, and whose bridle and saddle I could take off and put on at will. . . . A curious thought germinated in my brain: that I must give up my horse so that my mother might get better. The thing did not come about all at once, it was a terribly painful process for me! I began by flinging bridle and saddle into the fire, thinking that when the horse became very ugly I might keep him. I do not exactly recollect how things went, but I know that in great despair I ended by pulling my horse to pieces, and that, seeing my mother out of bed a few days afterwards, I long retained the conviction that my sacrifice had cured her in some mysterious way."[1]

M. Piaget discovers in the child, under a simpler form, this idea of the magical efficacy of sacrifice: the efficacy of painful or disagreeable acts performed in order to obtain the fulfillment of one's wishes. "A school boy," he says, "was accustomed to put on his boots two or three times before he left home in the morning, in order that he might not be questioned in class or tormented by his master. He had the impression that, the more troublesome this rite, the greater chance he had of being favoured by fortune."[2] Is there not here the germ of very noble feelings developing in the child? "I have always thought," was once said to me by a person whose devotion

[1] Th. Flournoy, *Archives de Psychologie*, vol. xv. p. 18.

[2] Cf. Piaget, *op. cit.* p. 125.

to a noble life I deeply admire, " that the solution of any matter depended upon how much of myself I passionately and ardently employed in compassing it. If I do not exhaust myself, or almost exhaust myself, in carrying through some project, allaying sufferings, or accomplishing a plan, I have the impression that, not having done my share of the task, I can expect nothing good."

To return to the child. The movements of his body must be connected by him with some external movement or other. He is, at the same time, aware of his desires, his pleasures, and his pains. " It follows that, when the baby commands his body, he must think that he is commanding the world. For instance, watching the delight that babies take in the movements of their feet, one obtains the impression that they experience the joy of a god controlling from afar the movements of the heavenly bodies. Inversely, when the baby takes pleasure in movement going on in the outer world, such as that of the ribbons of his cradle, he must feel an immediate relation between this movement and the pleasure he receives from it. In short, to a mind that does not distinguish—or distinguishes but imperfectly—self from the outer world, everything shares in everything and is capable of acting upon everything."[1]

It is quite evident that, in all this, we are not dealing with reason, even in its rudiments. We perceive in the act a sort of mental mechanism, in which it would be absurd to expect to find the slightest intellectual effort. The links established between the mental states that open out are links of an emotional nature. We are thus led to fall back upon the personal suppositions we have made regarding the origins of the belief in magic. It is not

[1] Piaget, *op. cit.* p. 140.

associations of ideas that are at the root of these beliefs, but rather associations of emotions. And it is singularly interesting to find in the child a proof of the role played by these associations of emotions. "During the time I was at school," says one witness, "my breakfast which I had before going to school consisted either of a cup of cocoa or a cup of coffee. Every Tuesday morning, we generally had an essay to write. If I did well, I noticed what I had had for breakfast, and took care, on the following Tuesday, to choose coffee or cocoa, whichever of the two I had taken just previous to my success. If I did badly, I averted bad luck by avoiding the drink which had, so to speak, played me false."

Needless to insist on the emotional association set up between the two related facts. This association creates in the child a sort of repugnance or instinctive dread. Repugnance and dread have a determinative influence. They may be replaced, in other circumstances, by an attraction and a hope. "When my brothers and sisters and myself," says another witness, "were playing croquet, we always noticed which was the mallet used by the winner and, without a word, each endeavoured to procure it for himself when the next game came to be played, as though the advantage gained by handling it gave it a peculiar property and so conferred increased chances of winning. In our game, I remember, there was a certain orange-coloured mallet which was regarded as possessing special virtue; to secure it, there were endless disputes and sometimes even underhand trickery."

All these emotional associations set working the imagination of the child who asks for nothing better than pretexts for building up a world of romance, *i.e.* for enduing objects with desires, intentions and habits. As

we have just seen, there are children who attribute to a croquet mallet the mysterious power of winning every time. Here is another child whose reasoning on the subject of marbles, though not diametrically contrary, is still perceptibly different: "When I had just won some marbles, *i.e.* transferred them from my opponent's pocket to my own," says a person when recalling memories of his childhood, "I never played a second time with the marbles I had won. My belief was that I was more likely to lose them than my other marbles, for I had the idea that the former were related to their old surroundings and had a tendency to return to their former owners." [1]

What makes it easier for all these beliefs to manifest themselves in the child is that he does not make constant use of the principle of contradiction. What amazes us most in uncivilized man is that he is capable of admitting with the most imperturbable calm, that a thing may be at the same time in a definite place and also somewhere else. Now, the idea of ubiquity does not offend the child's intelligence. It is not an easy matter to give direct and formal proofs of this fact. The first religious crisis, however, through which, according to M. Pierre Bovet, the child passes, definitely overthrows in many cases this notion—so contradictory in itself—of ubiquity. Everyone knows that absurd joke often practised at the expense of a child whose chatter annoys and who is ingeniously got rid of by being sent on some fantastic errand: "Go and see if I am in my room and don't come back to tell me." Such jesting would not be so common did it not correspond to a curious indifference to the principle of contradiction on the part of the child.[2] This indifference

[1] *La Représentation du Monde chez l'enfant*, p. 132.

[2] I witnessed the following very definite experiment on a highly intelligent little girl of two and a half years. Her aunt says to her: "Go down to the bath

may be brutally dispelled, as M. Pierre Bovet shows in an interesting case where is clearly discerned a moral consequence of this sudden appeal to reality. But, however long this state of indifference to logic may last, it is noteworthy that what amazes us, in uncivilized man, has its place definitely marked out in the development of the child.[1]

Finally, one of the most curious cases it would be possible to quote (in which we find a stupendous efflorescence of magic, and which embodies a number of the mental conditions already referred to) is afforded by Mr. Edmund Gosse's autobiography, *Father and Son*. It is about a child in whose upbringing all imaginative life had been forbidden, who had never had any stories read to him, all of whose reading was scientific or religious, and whose religion was austere and wholly devoid of mysticism. It would be impossible to imagine a more stupendous outburst of inventions and practices spontaneously indicative of rebellion against facts : " Being so restricted,

room and see if I am there." The child runs off, looks all around and shouts out : " No, you aren't here." The aunt replies : " Look in my bed-room (the room alongside)." The child rushes off and again shouts out : " No, you aren't here."

[1] " When I was a little girl (four years of age, or perhaps three and a half)," writes a correspondent, " we lived in a two-storied house. My father's study was on the second floor, separated from the rest of the building by padded doors, —as may well be imagined, seeing that there were seven of us children. I was a stubborn child, and found it difficult to submit to the authority of one of my sisters who had been requested to look after my table manners. When once we were engaged in a dispute, it generally proved interminable or ended in a very unsatisfactory manner. One day my father cut short a rising quarrel by saying to me : ' Listen, go straight to my study, enter without knocking at the door, and see if I am in the big armchair. If I am not there, look under the table ; then come back and tell me.' I had some difficulty in getting down from my high chair, and then ascending two flights of stairs, but I did not dream of hesitating a moment. This took up a certain amount of time, but finally I reappeared in the dining room and gravely informed my father : ' No, you weren't there.' Then, seeing that the rest of the family were laughing, I added with a look of consternation : ' That was a stupid thing you asked me to do ! ' From that day, the charm was broken " (Pierre Bovet, *Le sentiment religieux chez l'enfant*, p. 33).

then, and yet so active, my mind took refuge in an infantile species of natural magic. This contended with the definite ideas of religion which my parents were continuing, with too mechanical a persistency, to force into my nature, and it ran parallel with them. I formed strange superstitions, which I can only render intelligible by naming some concrete examples. I persuaded myself that if I could only discover the proper words to say or the proper passes to make, I could induce the gorgeous birds and butterflies in my father's illustrated manuals to come to life, and fly out of the book, leaving holes behind them. I believed that when, at the Chapel, we sang, drearily and slowly, loud hymns of religious experience and humiliation I could boom forth with a sound equal to that of dozens of singers, if I could only hit upon the formula. During morning and evening prayers, which were extremely lengthy and fatiguing, I fancied that one of my two selves could flit up and sit clinging to the cornice, and look down on my other self and the rest of us, if I could only find the key. I laboured for hours in search of these formulas, thinking to compass my ends by means absolutely irrational. For example, I was convinced that if I could only count consecutive numbers long enough, without losing one, I should suddenly, on reaching some far-distant figure, find myself in possession of the great secret. I feel quite sure that nothing external suggested these ideas of magic. . . .

"All this ferment of mind was entirely unobserved by my parents. But when I formed the belief that it was necessary, for the success of my practical magic, that I should hurt myself, and when, as a matter of fact, I began, in extreme secrecy, to run pins into my flesh and bang my joints with books, no one will be surprised to hear that

my Mother's attention was drawn to the fact that I was looking 'delicate.'"[1]

We are driven imperatively to one conclusion. All these are not cases of well defined magic; rather are they the germs of a belief which is only waiting to spread its branches in every direction. How many, for instance, of the cases here mentioned, without being formal and conscious processes of divination, put us well on the road which ends in this illusory science! How many other cases, especially of verbal realism, carry us to the point at which the efficacy of words becomes the purport of a systematic practice!

Whether we examine the adults all around us or study our own children, it is possible, in our opinion, to perceive in full activity some of the psychological laws whose working affords us an explanation of that which is so vital and powerful in uncivilized man. But this scarcely entitles us to assert that there exists an essential and irreducible difference between him and ourselves.

[1] Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son: a study of two temperaments*, pp. 37-38. London, 1913.

CHAPTER VI

THE REAL PROBLEM

AT the stage which we have reached in our analysis, we feel justified in asserting that, between uncivilized man and ourselves there exists, not an irreducible difference but a fundamental identity. One feels inclined, after a study of the above mentioned facts, to maintain that there exists only a difference in degree between the belief in magic as found in uncivilized peoples, and the belief in magic which can be detected amongst ourselves. All the same, this would be advancing rather too quickly, and neglecting a vital fact, that for the sake of which we have stated this problem: there are, on the one hand, the civilized, and on the other the uncivilized. It is possible that the civilized in their evolution have had the same starting-point as the uncivilized, but they have become what they are, and their progressive intellectual advance—we do not say their moral advance—does not seem to be near the point of ceasing. The uncivilized, on the other hand, have not succeeded in rising above a certain level; there is not a single group which, at the time we came into contact with it, was found to be steadily advancing towards something better, something new, in process of transformation and expansion.

I

We do not claim to set on the same rung of the ladder the Papuans, the Eskimos, the Polynesians, the Hotten-

tots, the Bantus, etc. Amongst these races, there is every evidence that some are lower or higher than the rest, and yet we call them all uncivilized. In all of them, at a certain stage of their development, a condition of arrested growth seems to have come about: they have not been able to advance farther. And as all alike are at practically the same stage to which they attained thousands of years ago, we consider, with every appearance of reason, that, if left to themselves, they would still remain immutably at the same point, and also that, if they are to rise higher, they need some intervention external to themselves. It does not seem to be a rash induction to say that a hand must be held out to them, to lead them along the upward path. Among the civilized races we have intellectual progress ad infinitum, a never-ceasing victory over material things. Among the uncivilized, we have a condition of stabilization, without any change for the better, a vain and monotonous marking time.[1]

A closer examination will show us a second difference. A mentality dominated by magic appears to characterize uncivilized man; it masters him, giving a precise and never changing form to his inner life.

Belief in magic really exists in civilized man, though it is not the sole element in his constitution. Clearly it is

[1] Meredith Townsend expresses this forcibly: "None of the black races, for instance, whether Negro or Australian, have shown within the historic times the capacity to develop civilization. They have never passed the boundaries of their own habitats as conquerors, and never exercised the smallest influences over peoples not black. They have never founded a stone city, have never built a ship, have never produced a literature, have never suggested a creed. . . . There seems to be no reason for this except race. . . . It is said that he has been buried in the most 'massive' of the four continents, and has been, so to speak, lost to humanity; but he was always on the Nile, the immediate road to the Mediterranean, and in West and East Africa he was on the sea. Africa is probably more fertile and almost certainly richer than Asia, and is pierced by rivers as mighty, and some of them at least as navigable. What could a singularly healthy race, armed with a constitution which resists the sun and defies malaria, wish for better than to be seated on the Nile, or the Congo, or the Niger, in

in contradiction with the rest of his intellectual and moral life. The fact that it is able to co-exist along with that which contradicts it and ought to make it impossible is for us a mystery, almost a scandal. Nothing proves this better than the attitude very frequently assumed by the medical and legal professions when they find themselves confronted with cases of this kind.

Last December, at Seppois-le-Bas (Haut-Rhin), a girl of nineteen, Mathilde Vogelweith, struck Mme. Eugénie Muth, her dressmaker, who was engaged in trying on a cloak, several blows with a knife, which proved fatal. On being arrested, the murderer declared that sorcerers and the devil had impelled her to commit the crime, for which she manifested not the least regret. She accused her victim of having cast a spell upon her. Brought before the magistrate, she remained stubbornly dumb, and it was impossible to elicit from her any explanation whatsoever of the deed. She cut her victim's throat because she was "tired of seeing her." Subjected to medical examination, she appeared to be obsessed, a prey to a fixed idea. She was confined in the lunatic asylum of Rouffach.

A few weeks previously (14th November, 1926), the newspapers published the following item of news: "In the commune of Mauchin (Nord), M. Emile Fichelle,

numbers amply sufficient to execute any needed work, from the cutting of forests and the making of roads up to the building of cities? . . . The Negro went by himself far beyond the Australian savage. He learned the uses of fire, the fact that sown grain will grow, the value of shelter, the use of the bow and the canoe, and the good of clothes; but there to all appearance he stopped, unable, until stimulated by another race, like the Arab, to advance a step" (*Asia and Europe*, 4th Edition, 1911, pp. 92, 356-358; quoted by Lothrop Stoddard in *Le flot montant des Peuples de couleur*, pp. 93-94). Townsend explains this phenomenon by "race." This word, however, affords no explanation, a race being always the result of historical facts "which have taken place" as Renan said, "at a certain period, say, fifteen or twenty thousand years ago, whereas the zoological origin of mankind is lost in the unfathomable mists of bygone ages" (*Discours et conférences*, p. 319).

sixty years of age, was shot at twice by his son Emile, aged twenty-three, and killed. On being interrogated, the murderer declared that, for some time past, a woman in the neighbourhood had been casting evil spells upon him, and it was she who had ordered him to kill his father." In this case also, the doctors declared that the murderer was not responsible, consequently he also was sent to an asylum. This was a very simple case, which Fichelle's lawyer kindly afforded me an opportunity of studying fully. The murderer had been under a doctor for stomach trouble, and had been given electrical treatment. This had simply increased his tendency to irritability. Since that time, Fichelle " felt electricity in his head at night time," and was under the impression that a woman neighbour, with whom he was in difficulties, " was electrifying him." One evening, being more persecuted than ever, he picked up a hunting gun and made as though to leave the house and " do for " the neighbour, the cause of all his " troubles and misfortunes." His father wished to prevent him, and, in the course of a scene—of which no details were given—was shot to death. In this particular case we seem to be confronted with a very modern form of the belief in evil spells. At the present time, it is quite natural for a man to look upon electricity as the instrument of the evil influences which an enemy is attempting to practise upon him.

Before such instances as these, it would not be in good taste to doubt the doctor's diagnosis. It seems quite evident that the letting loose of certain beliefs and of the fears to which they give rise almost invariably presupposes a state of mental unbalance. But how could we help being struck by what took place in the matter of the flagellants of Bombon ? On the report of two medical men, concern-

ing Lourdin and Froger, charged with inflicting blows and wounds, the examining magistrate began by returning a dual verdict of no true bill. Indeed, the experts had come to the conclusion that both the prisoners before the bar should be regarded as irresponsible, and that their case, from the standpoint of social defence, called for internment in a lunatic asylum rather than for penal repression. Maître Maurice Garçon, who appeared for the abbé Denoyers, justly and rightly opposed these conclusions. The truth is that the experts had refused to examine certain main questions, and, regarding as unreasonable beliefs which they were unable to accept, had systematically given the name of insanity to any belief shown by the accused in the supernatural. Other experts were appointed; their conclusions differed radically from those of their predecessors, and finally Lourdin and Froger were sentenced to a fine of one hundred francs and eight months imprisonment without reprieve.

The psycho-medical discussions continually being carried on in connection with cases of this kind show how greatly we are inclined to look upon them as things of the past, incomprehensible to men of the present day. In order to explain them, we sometimes speak of survival and then again think of phenomena of retrogression, but in no case do we look upon the belief in magic as essential to present-day human nature. We treat it—notwithstanding the numerous examples that might easily be given—as momentarily representing that which has been and will be no longer.

We hold this impression all the more keenly because, in many cases, the most superstitious men we could meet do not remain altogether alien to what constitutes the culture of our age. Doubtless here and there, some

ignorant and stubborn peasant will have but little opportunity to deal with problems along scientific lines, and will remain immured in the ideas and feelings that have come down to him from his ancestors and from his environment. None the less is it true that the effect of modern thought is constantly influencing him, now in the form of the public discussion of men and things—in the world of politics for instance—then again in the form of the newspaper or the popular magazine, and lastly in the form of what he has learnt, superficially, it may be, though to some degree, in the board school. He is interested in problems for which tradition does not supply ready-made solutions. In some particular circumstance, he commits foolish or irrational actions which prove disconcerting to us; but no sooner does he free himself from certain preoccupations, than he speaks and acts like any one else, without once yielding to other reactions which reveal his close affinity to uncivilized man.

While almost everywhere there are persons who seem to be free from the need of logical thinking, this is assuredly not the case with those gamblers whose mental disintegration shows itself only with regard to gambling and who, at other moments of their existence, behave as scientists inured to the most rigorous methods. A man will be quite different in his laboratory, when at grips with some scientific problem, from what he is in the gambling room seated at the roulette or the baccarat table at the moment when chance is about to give its verdict. In other words, whereas at certain hours he is a slave to his unbridled passion, his frenzied imagination, there are other hours when he is liberated—for a time at all events—from this servitude, when he is not only in possession of himself but also of all that constitutes the civilized individual. The

uncivilized man, on the other hand, is magic-bound every moment of his life. He has occasional outbursts of common sense, but he never rises in rebellion against the belief that controls his life. We should define the former as a human being who, while not incapable of any belief in magic, is not dominated by it, but is able to reflect, deliberate and draw conclusions as though it were non-existent; and the latter as the human being in whom the belief in magic determines the essentials of his inner life.

If then we can and must affirm the fundamental indemnity of these two portions of mankind, we must equally affirm that, as the result of circumstances of which we are still ignorant, there has come about between them a separation, by which one has advanced along a certain path and the other has taken a wholly divergent one. Consequently the difference found to exist between them runs the risk of appearing, in a certain sense, irreducible.

II

This grave difference seems to be the result of a sort of kink which, in mysterious fashion—mysterious to our ignorance—must have come about at some time in the history of those we call uncivilized. Must we be still more precise and show these latter as degenerates, as in a state of decadence and degradation? Stated in these vague terms and formulated with this misleading preciseness, the question inevitably provokes a reply which can easily be foreseen, which is in fact the burden of numerous books. This reply, moreover, is not more interesting than the way in which the question is presented. "It is a common opinion," says Sir John Lubbock, "that savages are, as a general rule, only the miserable remnants of nations once

more civilized; but although there are some well-established cases of national decay, there is no scientific evidence that would justify us in asserting that this applies to savages in general. . . . If we compare the accounts of early travellers with the state of things now existing, we shall find no evidence of any general degradation. The Australian Bushmen and Fuegians lived when first observed almost exactly as they do now. . . . Moreover, if the Cape of Good Hope, Australia, New Zealand, etc., had ever been inhabited by a race of men more advanced than those whom we are in the habit of regarding as aborigines, some evidence of this would surely have remained; and this not being the case, none of our travellers having observed any ruins or other traces of a more advanced civilization, there does not appear to be any sufficient reason for supposing that these miserable beings are at all inferior to the ancestors from whom they are descended."[1]

What Sir John Lubbock sets forth as common opinion, is in reality only a not very general prejudice or bias, confined to restricted circles in which scant attention is paid to scientific problems. It is based almost entirely on a theological *a priori* which many religious minds take good care to shun. "Common opinion," that which really deserves the name and which is supposed to be the faithful reflection of the most indisputable conclusions of science, is in this case so little worthy of the name, that it seems rather to favour the hypothesis of primitive brutality . . . not to mention original bestiality. The "general degradation" of which Sir John Lubbock says that he saw no proof anywhere is upheld in no theory of any importance; and there is no great merit, after

[1] Sir John Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, pp. 430-431.

summarily erecting an imaginary theory, in scornfully refuting it. The argument peremptorily opposing it was not difficult to find ; when considered at close quarters, it offers but slight interest. Renouvier, who could not be suspected of wishing to defend a theological thesis, shows with great reason the derisive import of the finding invoked. " That is a pitiful argument," he writes, " which consists in asserting that our first travellers—still so short a time ago !—found the ancestors of savages almost exactly like what we now find the children to be. The author adds that we are in the habit of regarding these men as aborigines. The habit is a bad one, if so be that it really exists ; the true question, however, deals with far-away ancestors, whatever be the cradle of their birth, and not with a state of things that may have been observed by going back ten or a dozen generations in the same quarter of the globe." [1]

Though by no means agreeing with Renouvier as to the general principles of philosophy, Herbert Spencer raised strong objection to the name of " primitive " so frequently given to the present-day savage. " There are sundry reasons," he writes, " for suspecting that existing men of the lowest types, forming social groups of the simplest kinds, do not exemplify men as they originally were. Probably most of them, if not all of them, had ancestors in higher states ; and among their beliefs remain some which were evolved during these higher states." [2] This declaration is profoundly true, and it is a pity that the English philosopher did not remember this more frequently and take full advantage of its import.

[1] *Critique philosophique*, 1874, vol. ii. p. 276.

[2] *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i. p. 106.

One fact out of many will illustrate the question, and also make it clearer. Of this fact we will quote but two examples, though they are so numerous that one scarcely knows which to choose.

As a general rule, the Australian is regarded as being on the lowest rung of the human ladder. Scarcely any one but the native of Tierra del Fuego would dispute this place with him: both are certainly there at the present time. But then the language of each of them is a bewildering puzzle to us. In most of their dialects that have been studied, in Australia at all events, there are not less than four numbers: the singular, the dual, the treble, and the plural. Sometimes these two latter numbers are expressed by altogether distinct forms; sometimes the treble is expressed by the same word that signifies the plural, but modified by an additional form giving it the value of a fixed number. At all events, the Fuegians have three numbers. Similarly, there are numerous forms of expressing the various modes of action designated by a verb. "In the past and future tenses of verbs," says M. Lévy-Bruhl, "in the language of the Ngeumba tribe (Darling River, New South Wales), there are endings which vary for the purpose of indicating that the act described has been accomplished in the immediate, the recent, or the far-off past, or that it will take place shortly or within a more or less distant future; that there has been, or will be, a repetition or a continuity of the action, and still other modifications of verbal suffixes. These endings remain the same for all persons of the singular, the dual, and the plural. Consequently, there are different forms used to express: I shall fight (future indefinite) during the morning, all day long, at evening, in the night, again, etc."[1]

[1] Lévy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions mentales . . .*, pp. 159-160.

Among the Fuegian tribes, the Yahgans have a language containing more than thirty thousand words, amongst them being ten thousand verbs, the number of which is perhaps still further increased by the manner in which they assume various prefixes and suffixes, indicating that one comes from a certain direction, or goes there, whether it be north, south, or west, above, below, outside, or inside, in almost inexhaustible number, without mentioning a host of adverbs denoting position. Both in the Australian and in the Fuegian tribes personal and demonstrative pronouns abound. The natives express in these languages the distance of an object, its relation to the cardinal points, whether it is but slightly or easily visible. To these languages might be applied the description of the language of China given by M. M. Granet. "In this language," he says, "a study of the vocabulary shows the amazingly concrete nature of the concepts . . . ; almost the whole of the words connote peculiar ideas, express perceptions under an aspect as particular as possible ; this vocabulary expresses not the need of a thought which classifies, abstracts, generalizes, which desires to work upon matter that is distinct and is prepared for a logical organization—but on the contrary, a dominant need of specification, of particularization, of picturesqueness ; it gives the impression that the Chinese mind proceeds by essentially synthetic processes, by concrete intuitions, and not by analysis—not by classifying, but by describing."[1]

Does not this verbal wealth and profusion, as shown by the languages of the Australians and the Fuegians, reveal a mental activity far surpassing the needs and initiatives of these natives ? But whilst we are tempted

[1] *Revue philosophique*, 1920, vol. i. pp. 103-104.

artlessly to wonder thereat, we are speedily warned that all this does not constitute real wealth but is rather a form of poverty. This abundance of concrete images is accompanied by an almost absolute dearth of general ideas; and this seems a matter of no small importance, for the statement is undoubtedly true. These languages are radically lacking in concepts without which no science could ever have firm foundations. The nearer languages have approached the time when science was to come to birth, the more this so-called verbal wealth, made up of particular expressions, has diminished. All this is indisputable, though it should not prevent us from seeing, and even admiring, the treasury of precise observations summarized in these grammatical forms and vocabularies. This treasury would seem to have nothing in common with logical deductions, with what will help to constitute science at its beginning. It does not put them on the track of connected theories capable of development or expansion. It testifies, however, to a singularly keen aptitude for noting particular facts. It is not a germ of science *per se*; though, by reason of the abundance of differentiated perceptions which it expresses, it reveals an extremely active mind, open to a multitude of intuitions, and capable of precise discrimination. Such opulence forms a violent contrast with the intellectual poverty of those who speak these languages. Neither they nor those like them could have discovered the amazing variety of processes which express so well, and with such a prodigality of detail, the relations perceived in real life. Here we have a power of concrete evocation, the invention of which could not be attributed to the natives either of to-day or of yesterday, and which comes to them from a past that may be far distant. We are told of descriptive

methods derived, so they say, from an outlook on the world quick to perceive and discriminate. This infinitely transcends the Australians and Fuegians of the present time. Their language speaks in its own way, not of a former civilization of which no one thinks, but of an intellectual state which preceded—and was superior to—the present one.

III

Before continuing, therefore, it would be a good thing to try to examine somewhat closely what must have been, not the first intelligent doings of mankind—of these there neither is nor can be the faintest trace—but at all events those doings of which vestiges are to be found in the tools and implements revealed by excavations of prehistoric sites. The great mistake made by theorists who speculate on the beginnings of the human species, is assuredly that they are somewhat too often strangers to this young science which suddenly confronts us, if not with our most far-away ancestors themselves, at all events with what they have done. Their material poverty, with all its train of suffering, will never be fully told, nor, above all, how admirable were their desperate attempts to remedy this state of poverty.

For as distant a period as we are able to trace, man has been in possession of fire. If, in his origin, he is but an animal, he is still the animal that has succeeded in mastering fire, and this alone suffices to distinguish him from all others. To depreciate him, as though wantonly, it is not very difficult to imagine the very circumstances to which might be attributed the honour of an unlooked-for discovery which, in its consequence, was destined to change the world. "In all probability," says M.

Joleaud, " as the result of forest fires caused by lightning, man came across corpses roasted by the flames, and thus he learned to cook his food. The slow combustion of these forest fires caused him to feel the beneficent effects of heat, simultaneously with his discovery of the light given by a fire-brand. Doubtless from this moment the preservation of fire exercised upon his mind a powerful attraction, all the greater from the fact that, when he struck pieces of flint against one another, sparks constantly leapt forth. In the course of time this element became indispensable in enabling Man to react against the general cooling of the temperature—the precursor of the mighty glacial extensions of the Quaternary period."[1]

It is possible to multiply hypotheses, telling us in what circumstances the use of fire was discovered. After delighting ourselves, however, with all these more or less romantic suppositions, we have not even stated the problem of invention. What is of importance is not that some particular event supplied the occasion for the discovery, but rather that a living being paid heed to this circumstance, and actually found in it the occasion of carrying out a master-stroke of intelligence. Prometheus dates back to the most remote periods of human history, and immediately proved himself a demi-god. Rémy de Gourmont, who has never been regarded as a mystic, has nevertheless written the following profound words : " All animal species have found themselves in the presence of fire, but fire did not speak to them ; fire spoke to man alone. When man deliberately throws a piece of wood on to the fire that has almost gone out, he manifests human genius. . . . Travellers may have seen a great ape warming himself before some natural or artificial fire-

[1] *Les étapes des civilisations préhistoriques*, 1926, p. 86.

place; none of them have ever witnessed a chimpanzee or a gibbon voluntarily keeping alive a brazier, still less attempting to obtain mechanically the spark that produces fire . . . man alone possesses the genius of fire."[1]

Though it may seem foolish, yet I must humbly confess that I cannot look at hearth-stones dating from the Chellean or the pre-Chellean epoch, without being profoundly stirred by the reflection that human beings, real human beings, who are actually the ancestors of present-day mankind, have sat there and exchanged impressions, after their own fashion, describing joys and sorrows, doubts and fears, hopes, and even ambitions. Yea, indeed, I defy the most positive and dispassionate scientist not to feel a certain emotion when confronted with objects that were once instruments of toil or weapons of defence of genuine primitives, provided he knows their meaning. Here we have a creative effort surpassing all those which our formidable modern industrial life exacts, and all the more amazing from the fact that these men appear before us with physical characteristics singularly akin to those of the anthropoid apes. The individual of the Chellean epoch, from the somatic point of view, appears to be very closely kin to the brute creation; and yet he leaves it infinitely behind him by virtue of the ingenious will-power whereby he makes that many-purposed instrument, half-weapon and half knife, to which the name of *coup de poing* has been given, and which was the first outline, the promise, of stupendous achievements.

We are in too great a hurry to explain these humble chipped flints, and the vanished material which went to complete them, by a spontaneous projection of human organs in the form of the tool. When it is alleged that

[1] "Promenades philosophiques," *éd. Mercure de France*, 2e séries, pp. 13, 17.

the arm has extended into the stick, the fist into the club, the finger into the hook, it may be imagined that an explanation has been given of what has taken place; in reality, we have been taught nothing at all. No one disputes the fact that the stick gives greater scope to the arm, the hook imitates the finger, and the club substitutes its own crushing force for that of the fist; this is telling us nothing new. The essential feature of invention is that one individual had the wit to see what others did not see, and profited thereby. One day, confronted with some chance accident, a man conceived the idea of associating with the functions of nail or tooth the sharp edge of a splinter of flint. However fortunate this hazard may have been, the individual must all the same have perceived some relation hitherto unsuspected by any one, a relation of means to ends, that is to say, something not obvious in the facts, and which, once perceived, gradually leads to their control. An idea of this kind can appear only in an individual brain. It is an invention, in the precise meaning of the word, and an invention always presupposes a subject who takes the initiative. "Inventors," as M. Louis Weber well says, "although for the most part unknown, misunderstood, or forgotten, have not in their inventions acted in terms of the group, nor by virtue of its suggestions and beliefs, but by virtue of their own intellectual spontaneity. Material invention is *per se* the purest—and also the simplest and most ancient—manifestation of the individual intellect, the *proprium quid* of the specific human intelligence. . . . The fact that it frequently responds to a need felt by contemporaries who are powerless to satisfy it, and that subsequently, for its propagation and conservation, it cannot dispense with social co-operation, does not pre-

vent it from being, in itself, an individual penetration into the world of physical realities, a blending of intellect with matter which can come about only through a single individual and by virtue of that within him which cannot be reduced to the collective mind."[1]

Has not *homo faber* tended to become *homo sapiens* by reason of the intelligence with which he acts? Has he not been this from the beginning? Assuredly it would savour of superficial psychology to overlook what essentially differentiates technical effort from the effort which is to give birth to science. The first is wholly utilitarian. In the need which it interprets there is nothing that resembles curiosity. It is satisfied when the practical result sought after has been obtained. Technique seeks after success instead of comprehension. It values its experiments only by the measure of tangible results. At the origin of science, there is a quite different need. It is not confined to the preoccupation of producing or perfecting some particular useful object, but is inspired by disinterested curiosity. The germ of this curiosity—a singularly obscure germ—perhaps exists in the superior animal that looks at a phenomenon for the sole pleasure of looking at it. A gulf yawns between the humblest effort of knowledge and this almost passive curiosity which is satisfied with the contemplation of phenomena that regularly succeed one another. This contemplation consists of a kind of game devoid of initiative. But if there comes about an unforeseen accident in the succession of events, if the habitual expectation is deceived, then the shock produces surprise, that is to say, a feeling of uneasiness which may be of every degree—or rather shade—of intensity. In itself, this shock is very far from

[1] *Le Rythme du progrès*, pp. 263-264.

being that wonder which Plato and Aristotle point out as the origin of science. Nevertheless, does not the one lead to the other ?

If the shock of surprise comes about in the very middle of an operation of utilitarian technique, why should not the individual who is the subject of it ask himself a question which, while arising with reference to a purely interested effort, calls forth investigation that really aims at an understanding of what has taken place ? It is not easy to imagine an interested activity which would fail to call forth from that individual a question intended to make clear something which has puzzled him. Here we divine a germ of reflection, of a wholly novel nature, a germ of that which is to become science. This germ will not develop inevitably in the direction which would lead there, and this scarce outlined beginning of disinterested preoccupations will perhaps end only in technical improvement. Why, at the dawn of that which gave birth to industry, should there not have come about something analogous with what we experience in our daily life, where it is at one time to a technicist that we are indebted for an enriching of science, and at another time to a scientist that we owe an advance in technique. This should not be interpreted as an affirmation of the existence of a true science at the time of the origin of races whose intellectual activity suffers from age-long ankylosis. We must not however forget that in the—apparently—simplest inventions, there was undoubtedly an intellectual effort, and that this effort was of quite a different nature from the interplay of illusions that gave birth to magic.

Where this interplay of illusions was predominant, it succeeded simply in arresting, as we have already shown, not only every striving after truth for its own sake, but

even the simple advance of technique. Magic is like the parasitic liana or bindweed which chokes the plant round which it entwines itself. By its means there has come about a grave differentiation between two great masses of mankind, and it would be unreasonable to regard one of these branches—the one whose development has been checked—as the living portrait of what the other branch was, that which has borne flowers and fruit. We fully agree with what M. Louis Weber says of present-day savages, especially of the populations of Central Africa, of South America, and of Oceania: "We are by no means warranted in placing these present-day races in the same category as those vanished ancestors who gave birth to the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Gauls, the Germanic peoples. . . . As a whole, present-day savages may be looked upon as relics of primitive humanity. All the same, it is clear that they are not simple relics, surviving witnesses of long-past epochs who have remained unchanged, for their very survival in itself has inevitably caused them to undergo deterioration. The wretched Fuegian and the dweller in Central Australia no doubt represent primitive man, though probably primitive man in a degenerate form. On this point there is certainly a modicum of truth in the opinions of Joseph de Maistre. Not, of course, that there is any necessity to believe in the existence of prehistorical civilizations, starting from which human societies have degenerated, and have revived only by the aid of supernatural revelation. The argument of de Maistre is too incorrect, too evidently intended for apologetic purposes. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the sociological theories based on the study of the contemporary societies of primitive men do not sufficiently take into account this fact, that backward specimens could

not be an absolutely faithful copy of the primitive societies which, long before the dawn of historic times, inhabited regions where civilization subsequently developed and expanded."[1]

IV

Why, however, in this matter of the problem of origins, regard only what has reference to the intellect? The consideration of moral phenomena leads to exactly similar questionings. In Africa, the tribes dwelling on the banks of the Zambezi, for instance, confront us with certain institutions which are inexplicable in their present state. The Barotsi seemed to be faced with a novel idea, unintelligible and almost absurd to them, when Coillard the missionary and his companions acquainted them with the value of human life. What then, to their mind, signified the charge or office of their Natamoyo? The Natamoyo is one of the principal ministers; his duty is to appease the king's angry outbursts, to place a check on them, and to protect menaced victims. All around his house anywhere near the *Lékhotla* is sacred ground.[2] Is it not evident that this magistracy, in formal contradiction to all the facts of their daily life, was not invented by a thoughtless, cruel, and servile tribe during the state of anarchy on the banks of the Zambezi at the end of the nineteenth century, but that it must be a survival from a probably somewhat distant past?

Another example. The missionaries in Lessouto complain of a state of licentiousness which seems to be on the increase. Their exhortations are met with coarse indifference. Now, this condition of things does not

[1] *Le Rythme du progrès*, pp. 72-73.

[2] Cf. *Psychologie de la Conversation*, vol. i. p. 311.

appear to have always existed. Eugène Casalis, describing the customs he found prevailing when he arrived in South Africa, writes as follows: "It was usual, on the birth of a child, to kindle anew the fire on the hearth. For this purpose, a chaste youth had to undertake to produce a flame, pure as himself, by the rapid friction of two pieces of wood. The people were convinced that premature death would befall the audacious man who undertoook this office after losing his virginity. When, therefore, it was made known throughout the village that a child had been born, fathers brought forward their sons to undergo the test. Those who felt themselves guilty confessed their crime, and submitted to scourging rather than expose themselves to the consequences of a fatal temerity. The same result was obtained by offering them the milk of a cow that had previously been drugged. The imprudent individual whom the shame of confession had driven to accept the challenge, speedily fell ill; his body became covered with malignant pustules, his hair dropped off, and, though he might escape death, he could not evade the infamy of his dual sin."[1]

We have seen that the Australian tongue would seem to indicate a state less wretched than the present, one that preceded it. Now, the men of one of the tribes which, in the opinion of P. W. Schmidt, represent the most ancient culture of the Australian continent, the Kurnai, claim that it is contact with Europeans that has destroyed in their young people their ancestral virtues, more especially generosity. Are we to believe them, or is this complaint to be attributed to the spite and animosity which they evidently feel? As a matter of fact, the object of the rites and teachings of initiation, which manifestly

[1] E. Casalis, *Les Bassoutos*, pp. 282-283.

originated before the fatal contact of races took place, was to inculcate in the young people those qualities which a pernicious influence is actually destroying. One of these practices had for its declared object to " expel " from its initiates those cravings which incline people to refrain from sharing what they have : " The headman," declares Howitt, who was present at the ceremony, " stooped over the first boy, and muttering some words which I could not catch, he kneaded the lad's stomach with his hands. This he did to each one successively, and by it the Kurnai supposed the ' greediness ' of the youth would be expelled." [1]

From these facts, along with many others which might easily be given, are we to conclude that all these tribes have lapsed from a state of civilization ? This would mean going far beyond the information at our disposal. What we may deduce from this information is simply that there would appear to have been a moral state which, in some way, was superior to that of the present time. Doubtless it would be absurd to picture it as characterized by the constant practice of fully developed virtues, by a sort of golden age of morality ; though perhaps it would not be too risky to see therein something analogous to what recent discoveries—which themselves may still require to be checked and supplemented—appear to show in certain very wretched tribes.

Is it not strange, for instance, that the Pygmies and Pygmoids, who are perhaps the survivors of the most ancient epochs, exhibit in the midst of a state of almost complete wretchedness, a morality superior to that of

[1] A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South East Australia*, p. 626. Cf. in Spencer and Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 265, the description of a rite the aim of which is to develop temperance and to make it easier to practise generosity.

many nations possessed of the most ample facilities of life and action? In considering any one of these tribes, we are perhaps in a condition to imagine what primitive man may have been. Renouvier, who could not have been acquainted with the discoveries to which we allude, but who had real flashes of genius, remarks that we are ignorant of the physical conditions on which lived the very earliest families that were clearly distinguished from all the rest of the animal kingdom; also that a distinction must be made between prehistoric man and primitive man. What can the natural sciences tell us of this latter? Nothing of his moral state, though by sound inductions we might learn his physical origin and even his birth place. . . . Prehistoric man—that is to say, he of whom one particular science which we may call pre-history reveals the existence and the principal tools—may very well have been man already become savage and degraded. No dogmatic *a priori* impels us to decide in favour of this hypothesis any more than in favour of the contrary hypothesis. From the observations possible to us, what conclusions must we reach as regards this man? They confront us with his wretched physical conditions, with his hard life surrounded by perils, they show him to us using tools and weapons still of the most rudimentary kind. But that he was more or less worthy than the average civilized man as regards domestic habits, social virtues or even intelligence, which we are accustomed—perhaps wrongly—to set above everything else, is far more than we can possibly assert. And yet, it must be repeated, that man was preceded by a long procession of generations; he is their successor and their continuer; he is not primitive man.

In saying this, however, is it not as though nothing at all had been said? This prehistoric man is not primitive

man, granted : all the same, it is very difficult to deny his animal origin. Moreover, being physically animal, how could he help being morally animal ? No doubt he lived at first like the animals, hunting for prey, fighting with the rest for his share, of necessity ferocious and possessed of moral characteristics corrreponding with his physical characteristics and with the urgent needs of his life which he had to preserve and defend. Consequently, does the distinction between prehistoric man and primitive man offer any interest ? Renouvier asked himself this question which immediately leaps to the mind. Note the answer which he gives : " Innocence differs profoundly in man and in beast, from the fact that the latter has retained it and the former has lost it : a phenomenon for which no natural history in the world can account. . . . From wheresoever man may have sprung, whatever he may have been at first, there came a day when, doing a certain thing, he told himself that this thing was not good. From that day onward we really have man, the only man we know, though his origin *quatenus homo* is quite unknown to us. There neither is nor has ever been any other man than that. Read the most systematically unfavourable reports—or those that are unfavourable through lack of understanding —which travellers give us of the mental state of savages. They have even dared to tell us of tribes whose language ' is scarcely a language '—which is meaningless ; or who, indeed, speak, though they lack general ideas—which is absurd ; but no one has said that he has met men who had no notion whatsoever of a *duty to do* or a *duty to refrain*, in respect to things which they regard as equally possible, the latter desirable, the former dangerous ; men who would not create *obligations* towards one another within the same tribe, or each towards himself, according to the idea he

forms of what such a man as himself *ought to be*. Now, here is the essence of what we call simply duty, an idea which no other animal than ourselves ever dreamt of setting against his appetite, his immediate passion. It is too evident that this foundation of all morality and religion is also the foundation of any customs, in so far as they are considered imperative, and that without such customs there could be no social bond. . . . Whatever be the mental process which leads man to regard himself as under an obligation, no matter how, why, or to what, he always reaches that stage in the end: otherwise there would be no dispute as to the sources of this idea. It is there that I consider man; I always see him at that stage. Now observe the consequences. The simple animal is and remains innocent: in what way? Through ignorance and lack of reflection, through wholly spontaneous impulses, which he never examines afterwards, wondering whether he has done well or ill. The man whom we pictured to ourselves previous to an initial act, before and after which such an examination is made, by reason of this distinctive character of his mental nature, is no longer innocent through sheer ignorance; he sees himself as one who is under an obligation. Let us follow him, after the act was deliberately and irrevocably committed. This act is contrary to what his conscience told him he ought to do; it is condemned by his conscience, as we are in the habit of saying. The commission of this act is the beginning of his moral history."[1]

If this view of the beginnings of mankind can be taken as true, we find that the different groups of mankind are at the most varied stages of morality, that they have never remained motionless at some particular stage, and that

[1] *Critique philosophique, supplément trimestriel*, 1880, p. 21.

they have sometimes ascended sufficiently high and then again descended sufficiently low for traces to have remained of these rises and falls. There certainly are no tribes in which dramas of " conscience " have not taken place ; these dramas, however, in no way resemble those which occur in souls of a higher type, and sometimes amount to a fierce struggle against a sensual appetite or a fit of anger. Collective idiosyncrasies may have been created by the consequences of these dramas ; and it would be very extraordinary if these idiosyncrasies had remained in the purely moral order of things and had not affected the intellectual life in any way. Are we not aware that certain crises of passion end in mental disintegration and a lowering of the powers of reflection and attention ? Now is the time to remember this.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

WE are still confronted with the same problem: how have we the right to regard the being we call a savage as an authentic representative of primitive humanity, while this humanity, in certain of its branches, has made amazing progress, and the savage has remained stationary, if he has not actually gone backwards? Why has this arrest come about? Is it due to an accidental malformation of the germ, as in abortions, or to the absence of suitable stimuli, as in the case of grain deprived of humus or moisture, or to a later deviation, whether due to the hazard of physical causes or to the exercise of freedom? It is in these terms that the problem is stated by Father Pinard de la Boullaye, nor does it seem possible that it can be stated differently.

Let us examine each of these three points.

I

The hypothesis of an original malformation of the germ is the first to offer itself. It is quite a natural hypothesis, though not a very probable one. From the somatic point of view, the uncivilized peoples do not differ from those who have so far outstripped them. Their sense organs are by no means inferior to what they are in the others. It has even at times been thought possible to claim that these organs were superior, and were possessed of an altogether special keenness of perception. This, to certain minds, was one way of lessening the divergence between these

human races and the animals. Precise and methodical observations, however, compel us to abandon this view. The fineness of certain perceptions which are specially mentioned is in no way due to any physical particularity, but simply to habits imposed by the necessities of existence. Experiments made by various physiologists and psychologists on several specimens of these races no longer admit of the slightest doubt regarding this fact.

In 1893 M. Louis Lapicque, desirous of studying the power of attention possessed by the natives of the Andaman Islands, subjected a number of them to experiments for which M. d'Arsonval invented an ingenious apparatus. He varied his experiments in very different ways. The Negritos examined gave almost the same response as the Europeans; they did not make a perceptibly greater number of mistakes. They were only a little slower in response, about one fiftieth of a second.[1] A few years later, Herr Richard Thurnvald undertook a similar inquiry though employing somewhat different methods, among the natives of the Bismarck Archipelago and of the Solomon Islands. On the whole, he reached the same conclusion.[2] Mr. W. H. R. Rivers, a member of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition, undertook an inquiry of the same kind in connection with the natives of Torres Straits,[3] and Mr. R. S. Woodworth, professor of Columbia University did the same with reference to individuals of various tribes who were present at the Saint Louis Exposition.[4] M. Goldenweiser, summarizing the

[1] See the details of these experiments in *Le Tour du Monde*, 1895, 2nd half-year, pp. 448-450.

[2] *Ethnopsychologische Studien an Südseevölkern auf dem Bismark Archipel und den Salomo Inseln*, 1913, pp. 15-18.

[3] *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, vol. ii. 1901, parts 1 and 3.

[4] "Racial Differences in Mental Traits," in *Science*, 1909-1910.

last three series of experiments, concludes in the following words: "The verdict of the above investigations is unanimous and unmistakable: the senses and the elementary mental reactions of aboriginal man are strictly comparable to those of his white brethren." [1]

We have already mentioned the repugnance felt by uncivilized men towards any genuine intellectual effort, more particularly towards arithmetic. When the work they have been called upon to do requires nothing but memory, it is easily and speedily accomplished. But no sooner does it call for reasoning, than it assumes a painful and repellent aspect. On looking into things more closely, it is important to consider here another trait of their mentality. This latter is essentially concrete. It does not altogether shrink from the abstract provided only it assume an aspect seeming to take away its character of generality and to make of it something particular. Mme. Emmanuel Rusillon asked one of her scholars in Gabun the following simple arithmetical problem: "I write down 7, and take away 3, what remains?" The child did not answer. Manifestly the question had no meaning for him.

[1] *Early Civilization*, p. 8. Personally we have certain reservations to make upon these psychological "tests," or rather upon the meaning one might be tempted to give them. They indeed prove that the mental constitution of uncivilized peoples differs in no way from that of peoples infinitely more developed, but the conclusion should not therefore be drawn that the power of attention is the same. First of all, these experiments succeeded only because they were made into a kind of game to amuse the natives. Once interest in them was aroused, their attention left nothing to be desired. But when we are dealing with something that is not a game, how are we to awaken and keep alive this interest? This is the real difficulty, and a man must show a certain degree of attention at the outset before he can fix his mind on ideas propounded to him —ideas that have nothing to do with amusement of any kind—and find in them the slightest interest. It is here that purely psychological factors intervene. Again, how long does their attention last, once it has been awakened? The "tests" have hitherto taught us nothing on this point, and the observations of missionaries in this domain have differed endlessly among the divers tribes. Nevertheless, the experiments to which we have just alluded, are very instructive as regards the problem of the psychological unity of the human race.

The mistress continued: "I gave you 7 francs; you gave me back 4, how much do you still owe me?" The child was still silent, though there was a different expression in his eyes. The mistress continued: "You gave me 7 francs, I gave you back 4, how much do I still owe you?" The child's face lit up, and he unhesitatingly answered: "3."[1] At first sight the story seems merely interesting and curious; at bottom it is really instructive. The little Gabun savage, involved in abstractions which are nothing but abstractions, loses himself and cannot find his bearings. This world of abstract figures tells him nothing. In order that they may have a meaning for *him*, they must be accompanied with concrete objects; and the more each of these objects interests him personally, the more his attention is aroused and capable of making an effort. Nothing of this should astonish us, for it brings us in contact with a humanity singularly like our own.[2]

One of the examples most frequently given in order to prove a difference that is psychological in kind between civilized and primitive races is the latter's "sense" or "instinct" of orientation. Many travellers of all ages have asserted that he possesses an extraordinary capacity for finding his bearings. A certain number of well known tales, unhesitatingly accepted by all, are at the basis of this opinion. A few contemporary authors still admit the existence of a sixth sense, regarding the nature of which they do not give an opinion. More prudently, M. Lévy-Bruhl does not go into the question, but explains the extraordinary facts related to us by the natives' amazing powers of memory. All the same, he has a high regard for

[1] Personal Conversation, 1926.

[2] Cf. in *Psychologie de la Conversation* . . ., vol. i. pp. 98-99, the description of a Congolese palaver, by M. E. Allégret.

these stories.[1] Evidently, if it were proved that the uncivilized peoples possess psychological qualities unknown to civilized man, the fundamental difference between two fractions of mankind would be established. This is why certain authors are so fond of repeating again and again the traditional assertions about the sense of orientation. These assertions are certainly unjustified, and whatever is built upon them falls to pieces.[2]

II

Is this the needed stimulus which was lacking in races ankylosed to the extent of remaining at the lowest stage of human evolution? There is nothing unlikely in the hypothesis, nor is it difficult, here and there, dimly to see a probable confirmation of it. Curious to relate, we find this confirmation among those who, in extremely distant ages, would appear to have been conquered races. Take the Eskimos, for instance. It is difficult not to regard them as the final survivors of men who have not always been relegated to circumpolar tracts and who have lived in less inhospitable regions. The arrival of hardier men, more enterprising and above all aggressive, has driven them back by degrees into those parts of the globe where the others cared little to adventure. There they have been left to themselves, without intercourse with the rest of mankind, condemned ever to revolve in the same circle, receiving nothing from any one, not even the incitement to invent something new. Having found that which was indispensable for the maintenance of life in so

[1] *Les Fonctions mentales . . .*, pp. 119-122.

[2] A detailed examination of this question at this point would lead us too far astray. This examination, however, will be found in Appendix III, which has been prepared in collaboration with M. Pierre Jaccard.

unfavourable an environment, they had only to conserve it and to live on it until contact with an egoistical civilization came to hasten their disappearance.

Another example of the same fact is supplied by the Negritos. They, too, are a conquered people. Whether in Africa, in Asia, or in the Sunda Islands, they have had to make way for competitors in the struggle for life. They found their refuge in forests where no one thought of following them. They were not tracked to these fastnesses, because there was no desire to turn them out. And so they were left in comparative peace, and nothing has occurred to induce them to improve their wretched mode of living.

To aim at being too precise in this domain would be imprudent, but is there not a certain probability in a hypothesis which leaps to the mind that certain human races, as the result of a veritable man-hunt, of incessant persecution and by forced migrations, have been gradually expelled from whole continents into the wildest parts of the earth, *ubi tandem defuit orbis*, in Australia, Tasmania, South Africa, and the Southern extremity of America. There, deprived of all contact calculated to help forward their progress, they adapted themselves as well as they could to the kind of life that was forced upon them, and their mentality for incalculable ages has been subjected to a state of almost complete intellectual inanition.

III

Other specimens of humanity have not lacked the stimuli of which these have been deprived. All, however, have gone through a period in which emotional phenomena have been predominant, though in varying proportions.

There are perhaps some that have lived almost from the outset in a physical environment where everything assumed the aspect of powers hostile to them. Exposed to the attacks of wild beasts, continually harassed by the elements themselves, by nature which was so luxuriant that it seemed aggressive, they were diverted from all intellectual effort because they were constantly assailed by apprehensions of every kind. Such effort had scarcely time to evolve. Between two terrors—or rather between the terror which shakes the human system to its foundations and the nervous depression that follows—mental effort was arrested, paralysed. The life of these men consisted of a never ceasing brooding upon fear. Behind that which filled them with dread, they suspected a mysterious will to injure. Behind every phenomenon they guessed an intention—an intention that was mostly malevolent. At the dubious hour of twilight, they were filled with dread of the dangers that approached with night, the mere thought of these dangers became changed for them into threats of hostile powers. In the darkness of their lives there was nothing that induced them to regard a phenomenon calmly and to try to understand something of it. Terror brought into expression its unreasonable and passional explanations: it condemned them to live in a world of occult powers.

There is nothing to prove that this nightmare existence constituted the ordinary life of the whole of primitive mankind. But even if it was exceptional, it is possible to see in this picture, as under a magnifying glass, what was the generating cause of their wild and vague imaginings. Anxiety must always have been present in these existences subjected as they were to the brutal influences of their environment. Even in the midst of a nature less crushing

than that which somewhat romantic imaginations delight in describing, less menacing, more generous in the kindly gifts of the earth, and less full of terrible enemies, these men were not obsessed by the consciousness of the forces surrounding them. They were sufficiently goaded by need to seek after practical means of action or self-defence; but they were not so bewitched by it as to be incapable of inventing tools and weapons. With these new born techniques were inevitably associated the promptings of emotional phenomena. There is no race in which these two elements have not been at work. It may, however, be said that there are races in which the passional element —that is to say, magic, in the last resort—has predominated, and races in which it has not been strong enough to prevent the reasonable techniques from developing, and what was destined to become science from beginning to feel its way. Here assuredly is to be found one of the intellectual bifurcations offered to mankind. But other cross-ways were still to be encountered.

Thus there have been races—and why not acknowledge that this has been the case with nearly all ?—that were driven by a kind of inner stimulus to create something new, in order that their wretched lives might be ameliorated or made easier. But at the beginning of civilization which was thus reached, certain races must have found themselves, by reason of the very progress they had attained, confronted with causes of arrested growth and of retrogression to which no fatality condemned them to yield, though once at work, these causes exercised their deleterious influence.

The possession of formidable weapons readily suggests to those who have them the idea of using them against other beings who are weaker or less efficiently equipped.

Now, it is noteworthy that warriors began by being hunters. It was in order to acquire the mastery over big game—such as the elephant, the rhinoceros, the buffalo—frequently in a condition to defend itself successfully, or for the purpose of attacking such wild beasts as the lion or the tiger, that man was driven to exercise his ingenuity in perfecting his weapons; and this kind of hunt is one that develops passions which are not exactly pacific. It exalts courage and causes contempt of danger; it even makes one seek danger as though it were a sport. Woe to the man who should catch hold, even in good faith, of the beast which has been chased and wounded by the hunter. Hunting quarrels are the cause of many a battle. Then again, the game changes its habitat. Hunting parties follow it. And as all these men are violent creatures, encounters and conflicts, threats and sanguinary combats become part of everyday life. There comes about a wild man's determinism, the progressive mechanism of which it is easy to follow. The combative instinct quite naturally inclines the individual under its sway to perfect his means of attack and defence. On the other hand, the acquisition of stronger and more deadly weapons encourages the tendency towards rapine and oppression. Actions and feelings react upon one another. There is nothing to check outbursts of passion, and scorn for the life of others continually increases. Meanwhile, the passions aroused by their usual occupation become ever more engrossing. There is one ever obsessing concern: game is often rare; it is naturally unsettled and easily moves from one place to another. How is it to be prevented from withdrawing into regions where it would be far too difficult to follow it? How can it be retained in and confined to those regions well known and familiar? How can it be lured into traps

and snares prepared for it, its power of resistance diminished and its ferocity evaded? In other words, how is it to be enveloped in a net of mysterious powers which will subjugate it sooner or later? Desire speedily leads to incantation. The mental functions, whose spontaneous exercise culminates in the appearance of magic, enter into play. As a matter of fact, hunters are of all men most given to fetishism. Like gamblers, they seek everywhere for useful talismans that diminish for them the hazards of the chase and mitigate its perils. At the same time, they give human form to the most important of the fetishes to which they have recourse. This is because personal qualities play a singularly more active rôle in hunting than in other forms of human activity. Strength, agility, courage, perseverance and skill are qualities without which the hunting of game and the victory over brute force would be impossible. The human individual becomes greater because of all that is expected of him. He pictures in his own likeness the powers to which he appeals. He attributes to them his own form, attempting only to make them particularly terrifying. It is this that strikes Livingstone in the forest regions. "We found that every village," he says, "has its idols near it. This is the case all through the country of the Balonda, so that, when we came to an idol in the woods, we always knew that we were within a quarter of an hour of human habitations. . . . It seems as if their minds were ever in dread in these gloomy recesses of the forest, and that they were striving to propitiate, by their offerings, some superior beings residing there."[1]

Whilst confidence in magic is thus clearly explained in the case of many tribes, it produces ravages both in the

[1] David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels in South Africa*, pp. 286, 304-305.

intellectual and in the moral domain. As we have seen, it checks all rational investigation into causes. It deadens thought which is replaced by emotional phenomena. It opens up a way to all kinds of passional outbursts. Finally, it perverts the most natural reactions against deeds of bloodshed and murder. The sense of unrest which ought to accompany the killing of a fellow creature is quickly transformed into the simple fear of the disastrous consequences which the act may entail. The pollution they feel has nothing moral about it; they have a vague idea of something material which is dangerous and must be got rid of. There will be endless lustrations, though no single thought that even faintly recalls the notion of sin, in our meaning of the word.[1] Magic invades everything. It is the cause of every kind of bugbear; it is also the only remedy invoked against these terrors. Such, at its outset, is the interior disintegration which has been the object of our analysis.

Another cause is lying in wait, as it were, to accelerate this disintegration. To make my meaning clear, I will quote the case recently described in touching detail by M. Robert de Traz:

"There is a Syrian saying which states that 'the Egyptian is the most intelligent of men when he is young, but he becomes the most stupid when he grows old.' Is this true? Europeans all agree with us in saying the children are precocious, the young boys alert and shrewd. Then, in the case of many, their development stops. Their brilliance of intellect dies out. Some one who has studied them at close quarters supplies me with the reason when he says: 'It is a case of sexual exhaustion. From their earliest age the Orientals practise excessive sensuality in

[1] Cf. *Psychologie de la Conversion*, vol. i. pp. 291-293.

various forms. Voluptuousness becomes an obsession diverting them from every other preoccupation.' A medical man with an Egyptian practice tells me: 'They are free livers who make too great demands on their nervous system. They are far more sensitive than Europeans to pleasure and pain.'

"Hence their craving after stimulants. They feel the need of excitement, though they afterwards relapse into a state of torpor. With the most refined science they induce sensation and render it intense. This vibration is necessary for them, they find it in the pimento which fires the very food they eat, in the variety of their perfumes, in aphrodisiacs. Hashish has at all times worked ravages amongst them; to this is now added cocaine, which is rapidly destroying them. They are constantly whetting their sensuality in order to keep its edge keen. Not content with the ordinary pleasures, they carry their enjoyment to extremes, even though it becomes intolerable.

"I should not like to assert that the Orient is nothing but one vast disorderly house. All the same, eroticism is widespread and potent. There is free scope for animality amongst these over-heated races, encouraged as it is by a blazing sun and the lavish exuberance of nature. And there is an uncompromising element in society itself which by confining virtuous women within doors, drives men to the others and suppresses all friendship between the sexes. Neither religion nor convention sets a check to the traffic in human flesh. Christianity alone, in all the world, has invented the notion of purity: purity which is not asceticism and is less the sacrifice of an instinct than the rejection of contamination. But in the East there is no such thing as sin. And as we Europeans cannot evade our Christian heritage, as—however sceptical we pretend to

be—we are still 'moral' folk, sensitive to disgust, shame and remorse in varying degrees, we feel ourselves separated from the Oriental by a yawning chasm."[1]

This matter calls for reflection. Instead of separating us from the tribes which we are now specially studying, it may shed unexpected light upon their history in the far-away past. What M. de Traz denounces in the Orientals is a state produced by one of those crises that continue century after century. Will this state go from bad to worse? Will it be set right by moral and social revolutions which will affect man's inmost nature? No one can tell; all depends on the workings of moral freedom, on the spiritual initiatives that men may or may not take, on the events that will facilitate or prevent these initiatives. It is certain that we are discovering how a magnificent race may enter upon a period of irreparable intellectual and moral decline unless it takes itself in hand in sudden realisation of the tragic fate awaiting it. It is also certain that this example doubtless contains a warning for other races justly proud of the immense intellectual progress they have made but whose vital powers run the risk of being gradually undermined by an increasing lust for pleasure. Here, however, we are not dealing with the future, but with the past.

If, in so highly developed a race as the Arab, the nervous system can be so much affected by conduct, what shall we not say of races which are not upheld by many thousands of years' culture and progress? What is it that has checked so many African races and brought about their decline if it is not the lack of balance caused in their inner life by abandonment to lust? Here there is no occasion to inquire into the origin of polygamy. We

[1] R. de Traz, *Le dépaysement oriental*, pp. 36-38.

willingly acknowledge that this is a fact which can be accounted for in many ways, that it has not been solely and universally called into existence by suggestion of the lower appetites. Whatever may have been its causes, however, polygamy has had consequences, which all come within the scope of sense exasperation. It is this sense exasperation, rising as it does to unsuspected heights, which is the main obstacle to any resumption of the higher life. We do not think we are under any illusion as to what takes place in our civilized societies, not merely in the slums. But the revelations of medical missionaries regarding the voluptuousness of the coloured races transcends all that our farthest flights of imagination could invent.[1] That which amongst ourselves would be regarded as pathological is a commonplace with them. There is a lack of balance which, extending over thousands of years, has had its sanction in the brain life.

We insist purposely on the tremendous duration of the periods that have preceded the present time, and on this point, at least in one sense, we part company from Renouvier: "Why," he urges in objection to Bagehot, "does it take centuries to form habits? Do we not find that a few days, a few hours suffice to modify a man's whole life and to determine its vicissitudes and its outcome, when an important act has been accomplished, if it be one capable of repetition, pledging the doer to other deeds and lasting in its consequences? Do we not find that the education and the fate of children largely depend on the life and the morality of their parents, in a word, that habits are formed in individuals in a very short time and constitute the moral environment of a family?

[1] Here again I refer the reader to the Appendices in Latin which M. Henri A. Junod gives in his work on the *Baronga*.

Among African tribes, travellers have noted certain changes of habits and customs, both considerable and rapid, due to mental alertness and to the attraction caused by some outstanding example. But even though a moral tatooing, once applied, were to be indelible for all time, as seems too frequently the case, this would be no reason for thinking that it has taken centuries to apply the finishing stroke."[1]

It is perfectly true that intellectual and moral decline, by virtue of the laws of solidarity, may proceed with terrible rapidity, but it is equally true that we are here confronted with one of those cases in which we must carefully avoid asserting that time has nothing to do with the matter. The longer a vicious habit lasts, the stronger

[1] *Critique philosophique*, 1875, ii. p. 10. In this page, Renouvier replied to a statement of Bagehot's (*Lois scientifiques du développement des nations*. . . . Paris, 1878, p. 131): "A modern savage's mind is completely tattooed, as it were, with monstrous images. A clean place could nowhere be found on it. But there is no reason to suppose that the mind of prehistoric men was thus covered with marks and figures; on the contrary, the creation of his habits, superstitions and prejudices must have taken centuries. It may be said that in his nature, prehistoric man resembled the modern savage, that he differed from him only in his manner of life." We may be permitted to give a few more lines of Renouvier's reply, all the more so because, without offering the slightest objection to the analyses of the philospoher-critic which we look upon as profoundly true, we do not accept the conclusions he draws from them: "I ask if, after the heads of families or influential members of tribes have by their actions determined their characters along the lines in which natural reason, instead of strengthening itself by exercise, becomes weaker, in which habit gains what reason loses, and gives its authority to judgments stamped with notions of vice and crime, injustice is accepted and justified by maxims. I ask if many generations must pass before there are built up tribes as savage as the worst we know. For myself, I see the thing happening in full civilization among certain families, in certain town districts, in prisons, as far as is permitted by the pressure of a general environment which cannot be entirely avoided, and which by no means existed for the first men. Remove this environment in thought, take away that which forms it and keeps it alive, that is to say, the enlightened head of each nation, and then understand that, taking into consideration the state of education and public sense in all the states of Europe, certain of our villages left to themselves may rapidly descend to the level of the degraded tribes of Africa, even lower than some of them, circumstances of war and misery helping, because the natural sociability of the clan has been greatly weakened by the institutions of civilization" (*Critique philosophique*, 1875, ii. p. 10).

it becomes. Such habits eliminate everything calculated to oppose them, and gather around themselves all that favours them and keeps them alive. They become embodied in social practices which react upon them and by which they, on their side, are made permanent. The determinism which they create becomes more than slavery. No longer is it second nature, it becomes nature itself: a nature perverted in itself and perverting everything. Spirit is no longer at war with flesh; it is flesh that has invaded everything and no longer leaves spirit more than a semblance of life which it places at its own service. True, a dynamic force of this kind does not need centuries in which to evolve, but when it exists and solidifies, not only during hundreds but perhaps during thousands of years, can one imagine the monstrous distortion in which it ends? Here time collaborates with the causes of degradation and death.

One fact has always given me material for reflection. Between the starting-point of uncivilized man and his present situation, incalculable ages have intervened. How can it be imagined that, in this stupendous interval, the primitive state and the present state have remained identical, and identical to such an extent that the one is the revelation of the other? Was there ever a human being who could continue to exist in a state of brutishness or of habitual passion or of unchanging apathy without, sooner or later, experiencing a reaction? We repeat daily that the intelligence which does not go forward goes back; inevitably it encounters the return impact of errors that take root and gradually bring about their practical consequences, which in their turn become determinative causes. That which manifests itself in us after certain acts cannot have been absent from the humanity that lived

during these thousands of years: enfeeblement of the mind, disinclination for meditation, automatism of the will which has either been reduced to passivity or subjugated by unbridled passion: all these causes, and many others cannot have failed to produce their effects. Nothing therefore justifies us in regarding the tribes that now exist as the strict survivals of primitive man, or in seeing in uncivilized man an exact image of the infancy of the race, whereas he is frequently no more than an image of decrepitude and senility.[1]

IV

These analyses, in which we have no suppression or corrections to make, would have seemed adequate a few years ago. At the present time, they could not wholly satisfy a critical mind acquainted with modern discoveries, or rather with the most recent views or hypotheses of ethnology.

We may wonder why sociology, in the case of certain of its best exponents, claims to supply immediate and definite conclusions, whereas the investigations of ethno-

[1] Here we may cite a note by Father Pinard de la Boullaye, in response to a strange commentary occasionally made regarding the degraded state of savage races: "Since nowhere in the animal world do we find any equivalent for these defects and vile qualities, we are forced to the conclusion that they do not come *from nature* itself. On looking more closely into the matter, we discover that they are simply *against nature*: the same intelligence that inclines the savage to seek for a deeper—in this sense, a supernatural—explanation of things (which is quite reasonable), has gone out of its way to discover it in brutal or vicious beings (which is madness). The savage wished to honour this supernature, this Great Being, and he expressed devotion by unreasonable acts, respect by deliberate debasement, repentance by a formalistic redemption of his sin. In all this, analysis discovers a lofty idea, *in germ*, infinitely superior to animal instinct, and a development *in deviation*, occasionally far below the imperfect—though on the whole normal—acts of the animal. We are therefore justified in considering that the reason why the germ did not come to anything is precisely because it developed in that direction" (*l'Etude comparée des Religions*, vol. ii. p. 198).

logy, on which it should depend, are far from being advanced as one feels they ought to be, and, in the words of a distinguished scientist, "ethnology is now in the inchoate and embryo condition in which the discovery of principles and methods forms its first and essential need."[1] This is the opinion of W. H. R. Rivers, as expressed in his short but thought-provoking pamphlet, *History and Ethnology* (London 1922). When he wrote his remarkable book on the *Todas* (London 1906), he "was then under the sway of the crude evolutionary doctrine of the time."[2] In 1911, when presiding over the eighty-first meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, he announced in a sensational speech that he had abjured principles which he had too long regarded as true, and that he approved, if not all the conclusions, at least the essential principles of the school inaugurated by Gräbner. In 1914 he published his *History of Melanesian Society*, and in the preface of this important work he formulated, as we have seen above, his judgment upon the present inadequacy of the methods and principles of ethnology. Struck by the borrowings which civilizations have made from one another, by the way in which they have frequently blended, he had the impression that they must cease being classified as though their evolution had everywhere been uniform, as though it were possible to determine *a priori* in what order they succeeded one another, and to arrange them according to their relative perfections on a scale leading from the least to the most advanced. Nothing has been done, he thinks, so long as no attempt has been made to disentangle, as it were, the

[1] *The History of Melanesian Society*, Cambridge University Press, 1914, vol. ii. ch. xxxix. p. 591.

[2] *Op. cit.* vol. i. Introduction, page 6.

intermingled civilizations, and to determine when and under what conditions they came into contact with one another.

Why should I not acknowledge that I have been through a similar crisis. In proportion as I analysed conversion among uncivilized peoples, it gradually became evident to me that another enquiry would soon become inevitable, and that some day it would be necessary to examine closely how divers idiosyncrasies of race or sex determine, in men's souls, different reactions to the Gospel preached by the missionaries. Hence my comparative observations on the Galoas and the Pahouins of the Gabun, on the various tribes in South Africa, on men and women on the Lessouto and the Zambezi.[1] What I had but indicated, though to me it was an enticement to future investigation, merits a thorough and detailed study, which will have to be attempted some day : it will consist in examining how the laws, whose most general characteristics have been determined, become modified as they pass through social or historical prisms. The work which could be postponed—and which it was even advantageous to postpone—for the understanding of what is at the root of the phenomena of conversion, becomes on the contrary imperative in the case of the ethnological studies which ought to supply sociology with a scientific basis.

The geographical classification of facts would probably have the effect of bringing many problems to the front : for instance, is it not strange, at first at all events, that between the bows of certain tribes of an equatorial and western Africa and those of Oceania there is so striking a similarity of form that the mind is strongly inclined to look upon this fact as something more than a bare co-

[1] Cf. *Psychologie de la Conversion*, vol. i. pp. 564-583.

incidence? Does not this impression gain tremendous strength from the consideration that the similarity is found, not only in the one essential weapon, but in huts and clothing, tattooings, musical instruments, etc.? Does not the puzzle then become more clearly defined, and is it any wonder that, in attempting its solution, we take for granted a related culture between certain tribes of Oceania and others which, in Africa, on the banks of the Congo, on the coast of Guinea, and even in Senegal, form islets, as it were, surrounded by peoples which possess none of these similarities.

The chronological classification of facts, if it were possible—we do not assert that it is possible everywhere—would also raise other problems. We should ask, with regard to each tribe, whether it is wholly impossible to plunge into the sombre story of its past and catch a glimpse of the way in which it became what it now is.

Now, these are not questions inspired by individual fancy. For the past thirty years ethnology has been developing in a very curious fashion. This development would really have begun earlier if the works of Armand de Quatrefages had been accorded the attention they merit. The feeling of rancour against them, however, was somewhat strong. The occasionally fanatical champions of Darwinism, whose exaggerations were then triumphant, diverted the minds of men from a scientist who had shown himself but little disposed to follow the philosophical mode. An opposition, visibly inspired by dogmatical assumptions, has on several occasions prevented too many anthropologists from noting the numerous original and fruitful views found in this book on *L'Espèce humaine* (1877, 2nd edition 1895), and more especially in his *Histoire générale des races humaines* (1877-

1889, 2nd edition 1903). The principles of procedure which at the present time seems inevitable were all expressed therein with adequate preciseness and interestingly applied. It is but right, simply because too many people quote neither his books nor his name, to mention what we owe to one who was a true pioneer. How comes it about that German scholars, who flatter themselves that they are thoroughly acquainted with what they call the literature of a subject, knew so little of him that they never even mentioned him ?

The first of them to insist on the effects of the migrations was Friedrich Ratzel. He is supposed to have opened up the new track by noting the striking resemblance between the bow of the Congo and that used in Oceania.[1] Leo Frobenius took up Ratzel's findings, from which the latter had drawn no conclusion of any kind, and made numerous comparisons, a few of which have already been mentioned.[2] This was the signal for the great works of Fritz Gräbner of Cologne, on the civilization of Oceania,[3] of Bernhard Ankermann of Berlin, on African civilizal tions,[4] of W. Foy of Cologne, on the birth of metallurgica-

[1] Friedrich Ratzel, *Die afrikanischen Bögen, ihre Verbreitung und Verwandschaften* (*Abhandl. der Königl. Sächs. Gesell. der Wissensch. zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische Classe*, vol. xiii. No. 3, 1891).

[2] Leo Frobenius, *Der westafrikanische Kulturkreis*, *Petermann's Mitteilungen*, 1897 (vol. xliii), and *Der Ursprung der afrikanischen Kulturen* (in 8°, Berlin, Bornträger), and *Die Kulturformen Ozeaniens* (*Petermann's Mitteilungen*, 1900, vol. xlvi.).

[3] Fritz Gräbner, *Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Ozeanein* (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1905).

By the same author, *Wanderung und Entwicklung sozialer Systeme in Australien* (*Globus*, xc. 1906). *Die sozialen Systeme in der Südsee*, *Zeitschrift für Sozialwiss*, vol. xi. (1908). *Die melanesische Bogenkultur und ihre Verwandten* (*Anthropos*, vol. iv. 1909). *Methode der Ethnologie* (*Kulturgeschichtliche Bibliotek*, vol. i. 1911, Heidelberg, Carl Winter).

[4] Bernhard Ankermann, *Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Afrika* (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1905). The present state of *l'Ethnographie de l'Afrique méridionale* (*Anthropos*, 1906).

technique.[1] The research work of P. Schmidt of Vienna, followed,[2] and that of the group which formed around him, with the periodical *Anthropos* as their organ. Another school, which began with research work in America on the various American civilizations, proceeded in a like direction. Here we may mention the names of F. R. Boas,[3] R. H. Lowe,[4] A. Goldenweiser,[5] and E. Sapir.[6] This school has proved itself a rival—sometimes a bitter one—of the schools at work in the Old World.[7]

In England, F. W. Maitland, the Cambridge jurist, proclaimed in 1897 the importance of the new methods in a formula which has every appearance of being a password: "Ethnology must choose whether it is to be history or nothing at all,"[8] and W. Rivers announced, in 1911, as we have seen, what he called his "conversion" to the principle of these methods.

V

In early days, as a rule, areas or cycles of civilization were fixed by characterizing each of them by some par-

[1] W. Foy, *Zur Geschichte des Gebläses und zur Herkunft der Eisentechnik* (*Globus*, xcvii. 1910).

[2] Of P. Schmidt's many works we will mention: *Die Stellung der Pygmänvölker in der Entwicklungsgeschichte des Menschen*, 1910, the *Origine de l'idée de Dieu* (*Anthropos*, 1908, 1909, 1910, appearing later in volume form in the German language), and *Völker und Kulturen* (in collaboration with Father Koppers, 1914-1925).

[3] *The Methods of Ethnology*, in *American Anthropologist*, 1922, vol. xxii. pp. 311-321.

[4] *Primitive Society*, 1920; *Primitive Religion*, 1924. [5] *Early Civilization*, 1922.

[6] *Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture*, 1916.

[7] Read on "the historical trend in ethnology" the short but complete study of the Reverend Father Pinard de la Boullaye at the fourth meeting of the *Semaine internationale d'Ethnologie religieuse*, pp. 33-46. See also the same author's *Etude comparée des religions*, vol. ii. pp. 221-282.

[8] *Collected Papers*, Cambridge, 1922, vol. iii. p. 285.

ticular object (*e.g.* the bow or the boomerang), though subsequently this has been done by naming their main social institutions. At one time it was feared that the Vienna group might be somewhat too strongly dominated by apologetic preoccupations. The monuments of ethnology which we owe to it can but dissipate this fear and open the eyes of the most hesitant—of whom I confess that I was one—to the scientific value of views which, though they do not solve all the problems, completely revise the method of stating them. Several representatives of the American school make profession of biological evolutionism; at all events, of the evolutionism whose aspect is familiar to us. They are somewhat inclined to regard the followers of Gräbner as being too ready to explain everything by migrations, and too neglectful of what is called the hypothesis of convergence, that which shows how dissimilar elements of civilization come to resemble one another, even in their details, under the influence of identical factors. The quarrel does not seem on the point of reaching its end, though one and the same conclusion may be drawn from all these works: that we must entertain very grave doubts upon the method which consists in ticking off indifferently, in all races and countries, facts that are arbitrarily detached from the society of which they form part, and from the living and relatively original civilization which has given birth to them, and in arranging these facts according to standards far too *aprioristic*, in an order representing the graphic scheme of humanity's progress. It becomes increasingly doubtful whether the history of human civilization can be set forth as unilinear and as happening by a series of stages, everywhere the same.

It must be confessed that, when compared with one

another, the monographs in which all these efforts end appear to lead to unexpected discoveries.

The first discovery is that the tribes who appear authentically to represent the most ancient stage of humanity are not the rudest, the most destitute of moral notions.

Thus, if mankind—as it has for so long been the fashion to teach—began in a state of bestial promiscuity, is it not singularly strange that the men in whom primitive humanity seems most truly to survive, *i.e.* those who are on the lowest rungs of material civilization, should be those who practise the strictest monogamy? This is the case among the Andamans, the Semangs, the Senoles, the Veddahs, and certain South East Australians. Is it not even more strange that, amongst many of them, marriage is an authentically legal institution, regulated in every detail, and frequently indissoluble? Is it not even more striking that those in whom the belief in magic ought, according to *a priori* views, to prevail most powerfully, are the very ones in whom we find this belief least pronounced? Undoubtedly all this still calls for a great deal of verification. It is even more indisputable that such discoveries seem daily to present themselves with ever increasing verisimilitude. Are purely theoretical reasonings, urged by Renouvier during the second half of the nineteenth century against the equally theoretical reasonings of the evolutionary school, about to receive unexpected confirmation in the beginning of the twentieth century? Though seriously doubting the possibility of constructing a scientific psychology of primitive man, I am even less inclined to accept a sociological romance based on observations classified and organized according to a preconceived plan. My hesitant inductions, there-

fore, as to the moral starting point of humanity, stand until they are proved false.

The second discovery is that we must not regard the beliefs of the uncivilized solely as intellectual aberrations. In saying this, we are practically at one with Durkheim, Hubert, Marcel Mauss, and Lévy-Bruhl, whose criticisms of the English school appear decisive. It is important, however, when we consider what these tribes are, to see in them the result of their entire history with all its interblended moral and social phenomena. In this result the entire human being is implicated : not only his method of talking rationally or irrationally, but also his ingrained habits of life and action, his way of yielding to or resisting the impulse of passion, the state of his spiritual energy. All this is so complex as almost to defy analysis. It is what might be called a functional synthesis. The manner in which the various functions of the human being have been—and still are—exercised, presents itself in forms of infinite variety, forms that do not all involve the same consequences. It is here that personal initiatives, decisions arrived at by individuals, moral or immoral discoveries made by them, have had incalculable repercussions. There are acts that proceed along the lines of nature, others that oppose nature. Ideas, convictions, and feelings entail appropriate behaviour, and, as the consequence of this behaviour, phenomena that are clearly distinct from one another. When dealing with the individual this may mean good health, sickness, or death ; when it is the race we are considering, it may mean prosperity, progressive decline, and even extinction. Between these extremes there are all possible gradations. Each of these states, however, is a complex that has its own distinctive requirement. It is these crystallizations

of phenomena that give its form to the existence of some particular portion of humanity. It is they that, for thousands of years, have made the uncivilized what they are, and have prevented them from becoming, of themselves, other than what they are.

If we do not take into account this important reality we run the risk, in practice, of making the most disastrous mistakes which will sometimes result simply in work effected to no purpose, and at other times will be dangerous, perhaps even productive of catastrophes. An idea, which leaps to the mind, is the corollory of the theory everywhere so widespread, during the greater part of last century, which represents the state of non-civilization as essentially based on ignorance and error. If this theory were true, all that is needed would be to found schools everywhere and speedily to diffuse as much instruction as possible. Can one doubt of the results to which this practice is likely to give rise ? Here it is not a matter of disregarding the usefulness—even the primordial importance—of intellectual culture. Disdain for this culture would at once condemn the one who felt it. But is it reasonable to think that the mere development of a mental function can suffice to reconstruct the other functions and the psychical amalgams which they form ? Something else is needed that is far more thorough and complete. Ideas are ridiculously powerless against brute forces united to oppose them, what they represent and what they would exact. This interior coalition domineers at will over perceptions, recollections, judgments, and reasonings. It does this by virtue of all kinds of compromissions scarcely suspected by the subject, but also under cover of a semi-unconsciousness which favours the unacknowledged compromission whilst concealing its

accessory character. The crystallization of feelings which the individual bears within himself without acknowledging them or admitting them to himself, creates a despotism which is all the more brutal from the fact that it is the less recognized. It creates a prism through which reality no longer appears other than distorted, and which suggests supposedly conclusive reasons for the most hypocritical acquiescence, the most shameful idleness, the most degrading cowardice. To see clearly that each thing should be in its place and that the intellect cannot do everything, is not being anti-intellectualistic.

We have continually to return to our one essential discovery: that uncivilized mentality, with the belief in magic as its dominant factor—is characterised by real spiritual disintegration. This disintegration—whose origins go back to far distant times and which consists essentially of an almost mechanical acquiescence in facts, of a rooted passivity towards the moral events that make up the interior life, of complete absence of initiative—is the deep-rooted cause of that intellectual and moral ankylosis that has kept each of these tribes at a stage beyond which it has never been able to advance. Mentality of this kind can be changed only by grappling with the moral state which, in some way, is its consequence, but which also originates it and keeps it alive. With this change, everything becomes possible. This change, which is a radical alteration in the direction of mental forces, we call, from the religious point of view, conversion.

VI

Does not this ambition to transform completely the mentality of the uncivilized peoples conflict with a diffi-

culty which we have no right to shirk by pretending that we do not see it? The question is to discover whether this very ambition itself is right, whether it is advisable to anticipate the return, to the rest of the human family, of races that have so long been despised. The answer given to this question is often that of the "conquistadores" of all times and countries and of the exploiters of "human flesh," namely that the only reasonable attitude is to suppress these backward creatures, and, if necessary, eliminate them in favour of the superior race. In maintaining this brutal position, and above all in putting it into practice, we do not as a rule trouble our heads with complicated theories. Being strong, we keep down the weak: this has always been so, and, we imagine, must always be so. If necessary, we try to justify our action by the undiscriminating repetition of rules and formulas gathered from a superficial study of Darwinism. We satisfy our conscience—a conscience which is not greatly stirred, though it likes to have at its disposal certain arguments that are in the fashion—by repeating a few set phrases about natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Thus we have been able to justify those atrocities and acts of bad faith which have decimated and sometimes wiped out the indigenous populations of so many of the islands of Oceania, Australia and North America.

Some people would like to see this state of things continue. But times have changed. Consciences have evolved, and facts of which we hardly thought in the past now demand the fulfilment of obligations of which we have just begun to be aware.

New ideas arise and force themselves on the attention of the men who are responsible for our colonial policy. In the minds of many administrators, they are causing a

veritable revolution which, though all its effects are not at once visible, becomes daily more pronounced. A new doctrine is being elaborated as to the attitude which the civilized powers ought to adopt towards native populations. It is gradually assuming, especially in France and Belgium, an official character, and its representation sometimes carries considerable appeal. It distinctly parts company with the conceptions of the past which were strictly limited to trade interests, and which, because of the lack of any human horizon, resulted in the systematic and almost always pitiless exploitation of the populations administered. This doctrine is permeating the colonial schools and is moulding generations of officials who bear no resemblance whatsoever to those whom, with a few extremely honourable exceptions, we formerly recruited in somewhat too haphazard a fashion. Without sacrificing the rights of the colonizing power, it accommodates them with the recognition of duties which are becoming increasingly definite and pressing.

"In the name of humanity's right to live," said M. Albert Sarraut, Colonial Minister, to the pupils of the Colonial School on the fifth of November, 1923, "colonization, civilization's agent, is about to undertake the evaluation and the circulation of resources which feeble owners withheld to the benefit neither of themselves nor of any one else. It is for the good of all that we are acting in this way; and, primarily for the good of the very people whom we appear to be dispossessing. . . . A proxy for civilization and an agent of human solidarity, the colonizer could not evade the moral obligations which challenge his attention from the very outset without proving false to his mission or abrogating his claim to authority. If solidarity was his reason for acting, it should remain throughout his

rule of action. In giving him a right, it imposes duties. The latter are inseparable from the former. . . . It is urgent to emphasise this point, the moral importance of which is supreme. For it checks the intolerable abuse which, by driving it to extremes, can be made of the great idea in whose name the civilizer substitutes himself for the poverty of incapable races. Certain countries have not shrunk from these extreme conclusions. No sooner did a race prove itself too feeble to increase the natural productivity of its territory than the brutal axiom of the struggle for life, the implacable postulate of natural selection, authorized its disappearance, its elimination and extirpation. This was the theme of German colonization in its ferocious extermination of the Herreros. The conscience of France recoils before such an idea. Colonization, by accepting it, would be worse than the barbarism it claims to redress. . . . Its duty is at the same time to take in hand the incapable native and make him useful, to train him physically and morally, to protect him from himself and the miseries that assail him, in short to educate him and above all to teach him to become our ally in the management, the working and the profits of the common property. This is the indispensable counterpart of the act of taking possession, it prevents this latter from partaking of the nature of spoliation, and turns it into a creation by human right. Such, my friends, is the essential character of modern French colonization, which, in far-away overseas territories, after the discovery of markets or base of operations henceforth constitutes our most sublime discovery, that of man himself. Man, our kinsman, our coloured brother ! "[1]

This new philosophy of colonization will have in-

[1] See Appendix No. IV.

creasingly practical consequences. Certainly we shall not at first succeed in making universal a method of treating the native which must be in strange contrast with what has hitherto taken place. Habits of scorn, of brutality and injustice cannot be thrown off in a day: besides, they are only too natural for man, especially when he is invested with powers which may easily tempt him to abuse them. There must also be taken into account the dangerous influence of climate which, at times, suddenly throws off their balance individuals who for years have appeared perfectly normal. The moral evolution of which we are thinking, however, will not be due solely to the necessarily slow evolution of ideas. It will be hastened by incidents that are even now beginning to appear on the horizon.

A form of propaganda, whose origin and centre of diffusion are well known, becomes increasingly widespread amongst the least civilized peoples. It cunningly incites their rancour and hatred, with cold and calculating passion points to the faults and errors of colonial administrators and to the acts of injustice—frequently but too real—borne by the natives. It knowingly indulges in bare-faced sycophancy towards them, attempts to raise insurrections that would have no morrow, or rather whose morrows would be either horrible outbursts of a barbarism overwhelming civilization or inevitable acts of repression on which it is preferable not to dwell. At all costs, the edge of this propaganda must be broken by a manifest determination that considered justice shall prevail, by jealous respect for the given word, by never-flagging efforts towards social amelioration. The Whites, too, must be on their guard as to what they themselves write in their books and periodicals. There are people at work who note therein and represent as a programme of brutal

exploitation, all passages that are capable of being interpreted as expressions of scorn towards the uncivilized peoples. It would be strange if our civilized nations, after revealing to so many natives the art of making use of our complex weapons, should present them by imprudent speech or writing, with spiritual munitions that would prove worse than shot and shell, in the shape of arguments for propaganda.

VII

The efforts undertaken or planned by chosen administrators will have consequences which we must be careful not to underestimate. But we must not hide from ourselves the fact that the contact of civilization with the native inhabitants of the colonies results first in the destruction of a social and moral order which, while being very retrograde and in some ways lamentable, possesses nevertheless a certain value and supplies them with the natural framework of their existence and activity. Civilization begins by disorganizing, from every point of view, the peoples alien to itself. It would be terrible for them if what is thus destroyed were not replaced. "Thirty years spent amongst the aborigines of Madagascar, West Africa and Polynesia," writes the Governor Gustave Julien, "have convinced me that, in all these societies, the advent of ruling races has profoundly shattered the moral edifice by destroying their political and social institutions. It would be erroneous to imagine that even the most debased of the peoples under consideration were without some ideal.

The first travellers who came in contact with them unanimously extol the comparative order which they enjoyed. Their religion, rudimentary though it was, had

at all events the virtue of keeping each man in his place, of imposing rules and regulations for the common welfare, of safeguarding certain principles of discipline and order by means of which life in a state of society was possible for everyone—for some even happy. The irreparable injuries done to traditional institutions, to the prestige of head-men whose authority was seldom disputed, as well as to local deities hitherto feared and respected, plunged into a state of disorder these human groupings henceforth without moral or social defence. After overthrowing the *tiki*, those megalithic deities of Easter Island and other similar places in the Pacific, after the failure and consequent disappearance of a theocracy dedicated, perhaps thousands of years ago, to the preservation of rites, customs and religion itself, internal competition and strife soon reduced the population to one fifth of its former numbers. The natives, hitherto checked and controlled, forgave neither the chiefs nor the priests for their defeat by the Whites. Alcohol, accessible to all—a substitute for the ceremonial *kawi* reserved for the chiefs—and then the entire train of hitherto unknown evils : small pox, tuberculosis, etc. . . . completed the disaster.

"It could not, alas, be otherwise, and it will always be so whenever, under any pretext, a civilized nation decides to take in tow peoples of another race and of a different mentality. At first there comes about an inevitable retrogression, because the so called guardian, making a clean slate of a past which *a priori* he regards as evil or else does not give himself time to know, effaces it as it stands, without troubling himself to prepare the necessary transition. It is during this transition crisis that there occurs, in the protected peoples, a general moral and physical decline which is sometimes irremediable. Hundreds of instances

might be given. The political and economical action of the ruling nation, unless tempered by parallel action that is very specially moral and human, can lead to nothing but mistakes."[1]

Profoundly touching is this disinterested testimony of a governor who, whilst exempt from any denominational or religious scruples or from any metaphysical *a priori*, simply states what a prolonged experience convinces him to be the truth. One may assert that there is not a single country on the globe to which the same tragic finding does not apply. And yet, there is one detail which must be specified. The social order in which these peoples have hitherto lived is entirely inspired by religion. There is but one other religion capable of replacing that which is crumbling away. Confronted with this fact, certain people will dream of a time when men will be able to organize their lives apart from any religious preoccupation. That is a perfectly legitimate hypothesis, though its truth is still far from being proved. There is nothing to show that the dream in question will some day be realized. That is a problem to be examined apart; it is not that which is now at issue. One thing quite certain is that, in these peoples, the complete disappearance of their traditional religion would be followed by utter moral depravity and would entail the direst consequences. At all costs the old and disappearing religion must be replaced by another religion which will inspire potent feelings in the souls of men and will lead them to a higher level.

The pre-eminent need of all these souls is to be set free from that which has been crushing them for centuries. They are forced by the most cruel superstitions to live in a world of nightmare and illusion. They are haunted by

[1] Personal letter, 10th April, 1927.

the perpetual dread of sorcery, and this fear leaves them a pray to all kinds of murderous suggestions. By preaching to them the Gospel teachings, we do not bring them—as ignorant people so often state—a new cause of trouble and uneasiness. Rather do we strive to liberate them from that which often causes them painful anxiety and even sometimes leads them to crime; what we give them is mental calm, peace, and joy in living.

Unquestionably the colonies have need of manual labour, but it is to the interest of the colonies that this labour should not consist of simple machines, that the natives should have a continually better understanding of what the work before them is, that they should be in a condition to exercise their own intelligence, and, at the same time, should have sufficient mental strength not to be at the mercy of unhealthy stimuli which might drive them to commit the worst excesses. The whole population should rise higher and higher in the direction of a truly moral life; an élite of high-minded souls should be formed. But it would be useless to imagine that, in a single day, and without a long and difficult preliminary training, men can be in a position to rush through all the stages, the very ones that our most civilized races have taken centuries to traverse. The problem is to turn all these aborigines into true men, fully developed and capable of all that progress which will be theirs eventually, and, as a beginning, capable of avoiding the intoxication of hasty and superficial knowledge, of keeping in check their baser appetites, and finally of entertaining legitimate ambitions, while all the time protected from a puppet-creating vanity.

There is no reason why we should declare *a priori* that the Gospel alone is capable of bringing about this mental revolution among uncivilized peoples. Here we are

confronted with a question of fact, and of fact alone. Are we acquainted with any philosophy whatsoever which, apart from the Gospel, causes men and women to undertake the stupendous task of this moral transformation? When we are shown one we must study with eager sympathy the results which it obtains. Meanwhile, it is extremely interesting to discover that the truly scientific study of uncivilized peoples shows the Christian Mission in a new light. Whether it be Protestant or Catholic, Lutheran or Methodist, whatever be our true preferences and our particular convictions, it is no longer what, in cultured circles, we may have been tempted to imagine. The Christian Mission is no longer the mystical and costly phantasy of a few religious individuals with high and lofty feelings. It is no longer an undertaking suggested by artless or sectarian emotions, a somewhat ridiculous attempt to induce little black boys to wear European clothes. Nor is it an epic, sometimes a tragic one, useful at most for keeping alive in the Church the longing for sacrifice and the poetry of devotion. It forms a definite whole in the historic evolution of the human species. Were it not undertaken, did it not carry through its task, this evolution would prove lacking in an essential element, the very one that does most credit to man. This Mission gives us glimpses of one of the goals towards which history is advancing: the brotherly and untrammelled collaboration of all human groups united in the understanding of the ties that bind them together and in the determination to achieve mutual respect.

We are little concerned to know whether the Christian Mission is to be alone in playing the part that it is playing. The one outstanding fact is that it is giving effect, in its own way, to an initiative on the part of those portions of

mankind that have reached their spiritual coming-of-age, namely, the decision to aid and protect—without any interested motive or the secret intention of exploiting them, but in obedience to an obligation regarded as sacred—the other portions who have not yet come of age but have for thousands of years been slaves of a fixed mentality which prevents them from rising higher. The Christian Mission represents a systematic effort, not to propagate intellectual knowledge—which assuredly it does not disdain, though it does not attribute thereto any miraculous power of spiritual transformation—but rather to call forth in living souls a reformation of the spirit, a radical subversion of habits that keep human beings imprisoned like ore in the gangue, and prevent them from developing their powers, a revolution which gives back to the individual the capacity of initiative, restores his responsibility in his destiny, and evokes within him—to call things by their right name—the birth of a new self.

Now we are in a position to answer the question at the beginning of this work. Have those philosophers and psychologists been wrong in maintaining the fundamental identity of all men? We have attempted to answer this question and we reach the conclusion that this fundamental identity is a very real one, but that it is not apparent in actual facts; that two humanities really seem to be confronting each other, as different as possible, so different that the efforts made to transform the one into the image and likeness of the other seem utopian and ineffectual. It is, however, an entirely theoretical view that inspires this despondent outlook, and this theoretical view might result in leading men to think, as they did in the days of Aristotle, that some human beings are born to serve and others to be served. It is easy to find people quite ready, in

order to satisfy their own personal vanity, to exploit these alleged conclusions which have been far too hurriedly arrived at.

In opposition to this pessimistic despondency, which some people would very quickly make use of, we have the conviction of the man to whom we give the name of missionary, who leaves his own country to offer the hand of fellowship and brotherhood to the uncivilized peoples. He, too, is not wrong in believing in a humanity that is one in essence and one in destiny. His work, in very truth, is to restore to the human family the backward children who, just because they are backward, seemed no longer to belong to the family. On the other hand, he will not be astonished to find amongst them a distressing inability to understand, to discover contradictions which seem to indicate the presence of a yawning gulf between himself and those to whom he is devoting his life, to meet continually with disheartening misconceptions, with misconstructions that appear insurmountable. It is for the very reason of fighting this incomprehension, of triumphing over these misconceptions, of putting an end to that which separates him from those whom he wishes to make his brothers, that he goes to their succour, and strives to convert them. Far from being dismayed by a bondage that shocks him, he will endeavour all the more earnestly to fathom its nature, to realise that while he must be at grips as in his own land, with all the passions of the flesh, he must, in addition, oppose those forces which have prevented one portion of humanity from rising higher and have combined to keep it down. He will not be in the least astonished if all these powers of subjection and servitude rise up to oppose him, for he is convinced that he will overcome them by his own determination, by his

faith in the might triumphant of the Spirit. It is the part of the philosopher to bear in mind the immense value of what this man is trying to do, to note the place he holds amongst the various factors that make for human progress, and to do him homage.

APPENDIX I

THE BELIEF IN MEN-TIGERS

With the psychological state of the magician who is both an impostor and the first victim of his own delusions, must we not compare all that has reference to the belief in men-tigers and men-leopards? Numerous crimes in the Gabun are attributed to beings who, in ordinary life, appear as men though they commit their evil deeds in the form of ferocious animals. To such imaginations there is nothing abnormal in this transformation of men into animals and of animals into men. In Africa, at all events, this belief is almost universal. M. Lévy-Bruhl quotes striking examples of it. He relates the case of natives of Benguela who, after seeing one of their number attacked and torn to pieces by a lion, appeal to the soothsayer in order to discover who was the real cause of the man's death. The soothsayer consults the knuckle-bones and finally denounces an enemy of the dead man, who, to give vent to his hatred, has assumed the form of a lion. The enemy denies the accusation. The poison test is imposed and the ordeal turns against him; finally he confesses and dies in agony.[1]

"Whenever anybody is torn by a beast of prey," writes Major von Wissmann, "they find out by some manipulation who has been the sorcerer who had changed himself into a wild beast. . . . On a former occasion, in a conversation with Tippoo Tibb, who is on the whole rather enlightened, I was astonished to find him clinging to this superstition."[2]

To these examples which I borrow from M. Lévy-Bruhl (*L'âme primitive*, pp. 40-41), I will add one of those stories that are well known in tropical forests. "A Mokusu head-man, happening

[1] M. Magyar, *Reisen in Sud Afrika*, p. 328.

[2] *My second journey through Equatorial Africa.*

to quarrel with the people of the next village, resolved to send them his 'leopard' to destroy their flocks. And, as a matter of fact, a sheep was carried off by a leopard. The natives, lying in ambush, fired a gun shot at the leopard and wounded him in the breast. Blood stains indicated that the wound had been a severe one. On the morrow, the rumour was spread abroad that one of the wives of the head-man was dying from a wound in the breast. Before passing away, the woman confessed that she was dying because of 'her man,' who had had her changed into a leopard and had sent her to carry off sheep." [1]

Certainly, to understand these tales, we must take into account the belief, to which M. Lévy-Bruhl returns again and again. But we must attribute a large part of the facts to interested trickery. It would appear to be a well established fact that men-tigers, men-leopards, and others are members of secret societies that make use of disguises for spreading terror all around, for perpetrating murders that are perhaps ritual, or simply for assuaging their own fierce passions. Mlle. E. Arnoux, from the Gabun, was present at Lambaréné when the alarm was raised that a man-tiger was in the vicinity. A real man was seen. "He returns, and the keeper, through the bamboos, sees him trying to get through the intervals. He bends forward and walks on tip-toe, so that he may be taken for a real tiger. Just as he is about to turn and make his way through the open door, the keeper fires, but the shot misses him, and, a few seconds afterwards, the boys hear him gallop past and plunge into the forest. The gun shot brings me running up. . . . Our lanterns enable us to discern traces on the soft ground: they might indeed be taken for the tracks of a huge tiger. How does he manage to efface his thumb, bending it in between his fingers? It is said that these men put claws on their feet and cover their bodies with wild beasts' skins." [2]

M. L. Morel, of Samkita, after ascertaining that several crimes had been committed by the men-tigers of the neighbourhood, says that they were "elephant hunters who attack people by night, cut off their heads, and remove their lips, nose and ears to make fetishes

[1] *Congo*, May 1921, p. 733.

[2] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1922, vol. i. pp. 66-67.

of them for the chase. They drink the blood of their victims, as this is supposed to endow them with extraordinary strength to resist the perils of elephant hunting. . . . The Akélé tribes, who are opposed to evangelization, specialized in this kind of assassination. . . . They counterfeit the cry of the leopard, and put on the tip of each of their fingers a claw-pointed thimble which they dig into the living flesh, to make believe that the attack is that of a wild beast. As, however, they make use of hatchets or swords, there is no difficulty in identifying their victims." [1]

The "Société de recherches congolaises," with head office at Brazzaville, has published in its *Bulletin* a study by the Administrator of the Darré Colonies, containing interesting details regarding the men-panthers of the Mid-Congo. He says that they have formed a secret association of fetishists whose totem or sacred animal is the panther. It would appear that certain well-known initiates have the right to bear the animal's name, to use his skin as covering, and adorn themselves with anything reminiscent of him. It would also appear that, among the conditions formerly imposed upon any one who desired to join the society, was that of making a contribution to the members in the form of human flesh. In order to procure this, the candidate wore a panther's skin, painted spots and stripes all over his body, placed small knives at the extremities of each finger and panther's claws on his feet, and then, at night-time, made his way into a village hut carrying off the woman or the child he intended for the initiates' repast. It would seem that these practices have not wholly disappeared.[2]

"It has been proved," says Father Pinard de la Boullaye, "that the Aniotas disguise themselves as leopards in order to kill their enemy, arm themselves with an iron claw which will produce a wound similar to the one caused by the leopard, and, with a carved stick, mark on the ground tracks similar to those left by the beast. The museum of Tervueren, near Brussels, possesses a splendid reproduction of the scene in high relief." [3]

[1] *Journal des Missions évangéliques*, 1923, vol. ii. pp. 106-107.

[2] *Dépêche coloniale*, 5th May, 1922. Cf. in the *Gazette coloniale* of 18th October, 1921, the article entitled: "Fétichisme et anthropophagie en Côte d'Ivoire."

[3] *Recherches de science religieuse*, October 1923, p. 458.

It is difficult to say to what extent the almost undoubted frauds which accompany certain crimes are at the origin of the legends that deal with men transforming themselves into tigers, leopards or panthers. These legends, finding their way among people predisposed to every kind of fear, confirm in one's mind the belief analysed by M. Lévy-Bruhl, while on the other hand this belief aids people to accept without question the legends which reappeared at times of panic terror. When we know how readily the blacks confess to crimes which they cannot have committed, we think with bewilderment of the atmosphere of illusion in which all these people live.

What induces me to emphasize the element of imposture which there must be in all these stories is a fact told me by the missionaries of the Gabun. It is extremely seldom that individuals, arrested for murders committed under the disguise of men-tigers, do not die before the day when judgment is to be pronounced. As a rule, their death is explained as caused by suicide. We may, however, wonder if they have not been poisoned by some member of the secret society who takes this precaution against possible confessions of a nature to compromise the mystery of the sect.

APPENDIX II

TERROR AND MENTAL UNBALANCE

THE following document singularly emphasizes the mental unbalance to which certain beliefs may lead uncivilized peoples It was given to me by the missionary Ch. Cadier, of the Gabun, who translated it literally from the Pahouin or Fan language. It was written by a native who, having been sent to conduct service in the villages around Samkita on the Ogooué, met at Akoghengol Pahouin head-men engaged in a grave palaver, was present at their discussion, and took notes of what he heard. We accompany this account, of which we have not changed a word, with a short commentary intended, as far as possible, to throw light upon it.

" On Sunday, I was at Akoghengol for the purpose of conducting the service. A man lives there named Ekomi Nzé, who has long been ill. When the sorcerer Békoune came to his village, Ekomi called to him and said : ' Treat me, for this body that you see has long been ill.' ' Good,' says Békoune, and he began to prepare medicine for him. He took pounded leaves of the cassava plant, put them in a plate and poured water over them. ' All go out,' he said to those in the hut. When they were outside, the sick man and himself were alone. Békoune shut the door and gave the other the cassava leaves to drink. Then he said to him : ' Sleep,' and went away. A few moments passed and Békoune returned. He found the sick man awake. Békoune said to him : ' What ! You have not slept ? ' ' No,' replied the sick man. Then Békoune continued : ' Now I know that you have no " évur." [1] How shall I manage to treat you ? ' He added : ' If you wish to get better, kill a man.

[1] Here we are dealing with one of those powers which do not seem to be personal, but which, according to the Pahouins, are living, move about, glide into the bodies of people, and lay hold upon an organ which they devour. This is the main cause of illness. When a man is about to die and he is suspected of having within him an " évur," the medicine-magicians proceed to a post-mortem examination ; if they find anything which seems to them abnormal, a tumour, lesion or calculus, they regard it as the sign of the " évur." They

Then I shall be able to treat you and you will recover.' 'Whom shall I kill ?' says the sick man, 'I have no one but my son, Békale b'Ekomi.' After a moment's reflection, he adds: 'Kill him and treat me.' But Békoune told this secretly to the son and Békale fled and went to work at the *okoumé* trees. Békoune then said openly to all around: 'I cannot treat Ekomi, for he has no "évur" in his belly.' The sick man, however, tried to find some one whom he could kill. He betook himself to the house of a friend about noon, when all the villagers had left for their various tasks, and said to him: 'Friend, do you know of a fetish with which it is possible to kill a man ?' His friend replying in the negative, the sick man, disheartened, returned to his hut and went to bed.

"This man's wife was a Christian, named Akoume Angwé. When the woman saw that her husband was not recovering from his illness, and that Békoune was tired of treating him, she placed him on her back and carried him to the Akélés. An Akélé sorcerer prepared his fetishes and then said to the sick man: 'Before I treat you, first of all send for your relatives so that they may see how I shall cure you.' Ekomi summoned his family, but none of them were willing to accept the invitation, for each man knew that it was intended to kill some one. Then the Akélé sorcerer said to the sick man: 'What shall I do ? My spirit came to visit you in the night, and behold, you have no "évur" in your belly. Your relatives, too, do not wish to come here. Therefore rack your brains, and, if you wish to get better, think of some one to be put to death. We will take his blood and besprinkle it over your body, for your own blood is no longer pure.' Whereupon the sick man said to the sorcerer: 'I have a son, he has now returned to his wife in the village. Choose one of these two.'

"In a dream the sorcerer beheld these two persons and saw that it

claim that this latter possesses the form of a crab or some animal with small paws, that it is transmissible by heredity or communicable by contact (Cf. Grébert, *Au Gabon*, p. 155). They believe that they have fetishes and various practices for expelling the "évur." But when the soothsayer does not diagnose the presence of an "évur," he is greatly embarrassed. According to him, he must then have recourse to deeds of actual sorcery and these deeds always begin with murder. As the people are well aware of what this means a wave of fear comes over them. The chief person interested in the matter feels his repugnance grow less and less; finally, his desire for a cure gaining the upper hand, he becomes accustomed to the idea of what he is ordered to do.

was the woman who must die. He summoned to his aid the other spirits of the Akélés, and all these spirits, in battle array, left their village and arrived at Akoghengol at dead of night.[1] And all the Pahouins knew (in "ngwèl")[2] that the Akélé spirits were there. The latter seized hold of the woman, who awoke and said to her husband: 'I have seen spirits (beyem) who have cast a hunting net (in "ngwèl")[3] over my body.' The husband gave the alarm and the whole village awoke. In the night, owls were heard hooting all along the way by which the Akélé spirits had come. Then the villagers became angry: their spirits engaged in battle in their turn and drove away those of the Akélés. And several Akélés were wounded by the javelins hurled at night through the air by the Pahouin spirits.[4]

[1] The sorcerer is convinced that he has mobilised the spirits of his clan. Does this refer to the spirits of the living men who actually make up the clan? This is not impossible. No man of the clan would believe that he could have disobeyed the order given. Each of them is convinced that, without ceasing to be apparently asleep at home, he may be present and active elsewhere. But this may also refer to the spirits of the dead. "All unexplained lights," says M. Grébert, "are attributed to spirits (will-o'-the-wisps, etc.). The Pahouins also hear the souls of the dead pass through the forest at night and cross them on their path. They say that they distinctly recognize their whisperings. I requested a Pahouin to imitate the sound for me, the imitation he gave exactly resembled the slight whirr of an owl's wings at night time. Similarly, there arises a great concert of spirit voices when it is about to rain and the drops are heard from a distance falling on the leaves: it is then that the spirits are engaged in a palaver" (*Au Gabon*, p. 150). On the other hand, the clan into which these spirits are supposed to transfer themselves in obedience to the sorcerer, is fully aware that the latter has given them this order, that this is one of his ways of fighting. Intense excitement prevails everywhere and affects the whole people. An outbreak of auto-suggestion will speedily follow.

[2] That is to say, in the state which is not altogether dream, but which borders on hallucination. It is we who express ourselves in this fashion. The Pahouin, when saying that he has perceived something in "ngwèl" means that he has perceived it occultly, by a sort of mysterious contact with the invisible, by leaving his personality and entering a world which is not the ordinary world, though to him it is very real indeed. How are we to express that which he finds inexpressible?

[3] Here the word indicates not only the state of the one who perceives, but the nature of the object perceived which remains occult and invisible.

[4] Evidently real javelins were not used, unless these were hurled by persons in a state of frenzied terror. It is to this counter-attack on the part of the Pahouins that will assuredly be attributed the illnesses or accidents which may take place among the Akélés. Several members of this clan are ill: their illness is at once explained by the attack made upon them. Auto-suggestion continues to operate: it works until it becomes deadly.

"Two Akélés died. A third, who was wounded, a few days afterwards asked a Pahouin (Esameyagha): 'Is the woman we seized dead?' 'No,' was the answer, 'but she is very ill.' 'She will surely die,' said the Akélé, 'and it is because of her that we also shall die.' The following day, Békale's wife was dead, and the Akélé also.

"At the present time, the Akélés complain, for the Pahouins took too severe a revenge upon them. 'If we had some one,' they say, 'to judge this affair, we should certainly engage in a "palaver" with the Esameyaghas.'[1]

"That same Sunday, Békale pleads against his father Ekomi before the Pahouin head-men. The son says: 'You have killed my wife, or at all events you are the cause of her death. If you had not gone to be treated by the Akélés, they would not have come and killed her.' But the father defends himself with the words: 'I know nothing of all that.' When they had finished speaking, the head-men who were judges in the palaver said: 'Ekomi, it is really you who are the murderer, and your wife also is guilty. Not that you yourselves have eaten the heart of your daughter-in-law, but when your wife carried you to the Akélés, you were aware that they do not treat one man without killing another. Therefore pay your son for his wife's corpse.

"This was all that I heard."

Signed: MBA EYANA."

[1] Here we reach the very heart of the complications in the system of vendetta or compensation. It is not simply materially real aggressions that occasion so many quarrels; it is also everything that has been imagined or dreamt. Hence is it that malice and spite are for ever on the watch, and that endless and vain palavers are the order of the day.

APPENDIX III

THE INSTINCT OF ORIENTATION

(Sense of Direction)

A considerable time has passed since a number of observers protested against this legend. Thus, with reference to marvellous accounts of orientation published in 1873 in the pages of *Nature*, Mr. A. W. Howitt wrote the following letter which appeared in the number dated the 21st of August:

"I have not met with aboriginal natives either as savages or as 'tame blacks' who possessed any power of finding their way from place to place differing in its nature, though perhaps in its degree, from that to be found in every good 'bushman' among the whites. Their knowledge of country is entirely local—special as regards the district belonging to their tribe or family—general as regards the country of the neighbouring tribes. They know it thoroughly because they have been born in it and have roamed over it ever since. Out of their own locality I have found them to be inferior to a good white 'bushman,' in so far that they are unable to reason out any problem relative to the features of the country, and my experience has shown that out of their local knowledge I could never rely upon one of them in preference to my own judgment. I have remarked also that very few could, even in their own districts, travel straight from one place to another, say at twenty miles distance. I now refer specially to the aborigines of that part of the interior of the continent lying on each side, north and south, of Sturt's Desert and including Cooper's Creek (between Queensland and New South Wales). As a rule they would 'give and take' some 30° on each side of the course, correcting the direction from time to time as they recognised the 'lay of the country' from rising ground."

The authors who have vied with one another in exploiting these precious stories have never alluded to the protest made by this

qualified witness. And herein lies the defect of their method. All the positive facts in which orientation seemed to have taken place in the most surprising fashion have been collected, but no attention has ever been paid to the *negative* facts. The same error has vitiated the entire study of animal orientation. M. Edouard Claparède alone has drawn attention to "le défaut du sens du retour."

Nevertheless, since the time of Howitt, several witnesses have published negative observations. For instance, M. Le Petit related to M. Van Gennep "various episodes of his elephant hunts during which, after long circuits and when the time had come to retrace their steps, the Blacks organized a regular palaver, with discussions, during which contradictory opinions were expressed, to decide upon the way to take." Once, having gone astray in the forest when accompanied by a Black, the latter was unable to tell him the direction of the village from which they had started, though it was not far distant, and M. Le Petit had to wait until the sun was beginning to set in order that he might himself determine the right direction. M. Le Petit rightly distinguishes between those Blacks who are sedentary and those who are hunters by profession. The former are incapable of finding their way in unknown territory; the latter, on the other hand, can do this, though only by reason of a remarkable development of their powers of observation. The same Van Gennep, from whom we have taken this testimony and who himself admits the reality of this sense of orientation, also quotes the explicit testimony of Dr. Péchuël-Lösche. The latter, in his monograph on the population of Loango (1907) remarks that most of the negroes of that region frequently wander astray, and when this happens they lose their heads completely: some of them, however, acquire a remarkable sense of direction. He also reports that, from what he has heard, the Bushmen of South Africa lose themselves in the desert. All these quotations may be found in Van Gennep's book, *Religion, Moeurs et Légendes*, vol. iii. pp. 33-61.

The development of observation and memory, which no one attempts to dispute, suffices to explain all the marvellous facts related during the past two centuries by authors who have faithfully reproduced the testimony of the Jesuit missionaries of the eighteenth century, especially that of Father de Charlevoix.

We do not really find in man—any more than in the animals—a specific sense of orientation. This is the conclusion that has been reached by Ed. Claparède and Et. Rabaud in their recent articles in the *Journal de Psychologie*.

This opinion, all the same, is far from receiving general acceptance. The reason is that no systematic study of this question has up to the present been made. In all likelihood, a somewhat detailed examination into the traditional accounts would reveal a certain degree of exaggeration on the part of the witnesses and would demonstrate their credulity. This examination was undertaken by M. Pierre Jaccard in a hitherto unpublished work on *l'Orientation lointaine chez l'homme*, in which he has collected, compared and classified available evidence, which he aims at completing by a personal investigation. This work definitely confirms the conclusions of Claparède and Rabaud.

More than this, by experiments in walking blindfold it is possible to demonstrate the non-existence of the sense of instinctive orientation both in man and in the animal. Man, whether civilized or not, is incapable, as also is the animal, of proceeding in a straight line when the experimenter really eliminates all landmarks. Under such conditions, the animal or the man advances automatically and regularly deviates to the left; to such a degree is this the case that after a certain time he finds himself again at the place from which he started. This deviation, probably caused by the fact that the right half of the body is stronger than the left, is universal. It had often been described as taking place in all animals, and in human beings whether civilized or not.

George Catlin, the author of a book of travels in the prairies of North America, published in 1850, gives an instance of a mishap which befel him because of this deviation. This is what he says: "On arriving at the village of the Sioux and relating our strange adventure, the Indians began to laugh heartily, and all the chiefs were unanimous in assuring me that, when a man is lost in the prairies, he walks in a circle, invariably turning to the left." [1] This strange deviation, manifesting itself whenever external landmarks

[1] Pierre Jaccard, "Une enquête sur la désorientation en montagne," *Bulletin de la Société vaudoise des sciences naturelles*, vol. lvi. p. 154, Lausanne, 1926.

are absent, irrefutably proves the non-existence, both in the animal and in man, of that sense or instinct of orientation which has been so often discussed. Armchair scientists, who hitherto have dealt with the question, have been unaware of it. For all that, in 1897 a Norwegian biologist, F. O. Guldberg, had demonstrated how it worked in the case of the animal. His investigations, quoted only by such scientists as Van Biervlet who dealt with the dissymmetry of the body, have remained unknown to specialists in orientation (V. Connet, Van Gennep, Claparède, Et. Rabaud, etc.).

M. Pierre Jaccard, in the article above mentioned and in a communication to the Société de Psychologie in 1927, was the first to demonstrate that the fact of deviation upset the entire legend regarding the instinct of orientation. On this subject he is preparing a second work entitled, *Essai sur les deviations inconscientes et spontanées de la marche dans l'obscurité.*

It is easy to see how far these investigations confirm the fundamental idea of our enquiry into the mentality of uncivilized peoples. Not only does primitive man not ascertain his bearings differently from civilized man, but he loses himself quite as easily as the latter when his external landmarks are removed! The alleged *natural* difference between the psychological aptitudes of civilized and non-civilized man is non-existent, even in this domain of orientation which has hitherto seemed so confusing.

APPENDIX IV

THE NEW DOCTRINE OF COLONIZATION

I

Extract from a speech delivered in 1923 *by M. Albert Sarraut, Colonial Minister, at the opening meeting to the classes of the École coloniale* :

"The legitimacy of colonization ? The rights of that authority which, in your country's name, you are about to exercise over other peoples ? These are grave questions which you cannot leave unanswered. How are you to act determinedly, with all that abandonment of enthusiasm which insists on success, if you show hesitation at this stage ? Some day, when deep in the bush, during one of these fleeting hours of weariness or perplexity which the strongest experience on being confronted with too difficult a task or some untoward incident, you will perhaps ask : 'Why am I here ? Have I the right to stay here and to speak with authority ? Is not the act of conquest which has brought me to this spot really an act of spoliation which leaves an original stain and blemish upon everything I do ? A citizen of Republican France, a son of the land that is the traditional champion of justice and which for half a century has never ceased to protest against the violation of right inflicted upon it in 1871, am I not here the instrument of might against another's right, and, however sacred be the claim of my country, can I dismiss the thought, that, from the standpoint of the higher justice, this claim has no legitimate basis ? '

" Friends, I have passed through that anxious hour when the conscience is thus confronted with apparent contradictions. For the irony of fate brought me into public life under the discipline of men who implacably repudiated colonial expansion. I was their pupil, and when destiny sent me out to live beyond the seas, their words still rang in my ears. For twelve years, as Governor General

in the tropics and as Colonial Minister in France, I have reflected long upon the question of colonization, its legitimacy and its moral consequences. These meditations, daily nourished and controlled by the experience of actual facts have resulted in the sane and glowing conviction with which, if need be, I should like to fill your own souls.

"... What is the use of glossing the truth? In its beginnings, colonization was not an act of civilization, the will to civilize. It was an act of force ... of interested force. It is an episode in the struggle for life, that great vital competition which, from men to groups, from groups to nations, has gone on spreading throughout the vast world. The peoples who go out to seek colonies in distant continents and seize them at first think only of themselves, work only to acquire power, conquer only for their own profit. The things they covet in these colonies are commercial markets and political centres. No idea of civilization is at the back of the adventurous undertaking; it may incidentally accompany though it will not control it. Civilization implies altruism, the generous purpose of being useful to others. In its beginnings, colonization is but an enterprise of personal, one-sided and selfish interest, something that the stronger imposes upon the weaker. Such are the facts of history.... For long, for too long, the realistic and pitiless commercialism which marks colonization in its beginnings has protracted the primal curse inscribed by destiny in the pigment of the native's face, and the icy dogmatism of natural selection assists the trader in ruthlessly exhausting or maintaining in a state of bondage a human being regarded as eternally inferior. The black, red or yellow native is not so much a man as an instrument of toil, of worth only in so far as he can serve, and flung aside once he is useless. Why show consideration for him, seeing that the law of selection has settled beforehand the fate of those who will be able—or not—to resist? What is the use of caring for his children and watching over the preservation of the race since his natural prolification must automatically fill up the voids made in the 'flock' by various evils and epidemics, by physiological indigence or by forced labour? Above all, what is the use of teaching and improving him, of trying to raise him to one's own level, since it is acknowledged that the

colour of his skin predestines him to the everlasting servitude of beings irremediably inferior? Humanity's duty with regard to him will be adequately performed by the kind offices of a more or less liberal and generous charity.

"This inhuman conception has hitherto held sway. It is that of the old colonial pact. France to her credit was the first to comprehend the human worth of backward races, and the sacred obligation to respect and enhance that worth. The glorious conception of justice that permeates the tradition of the land of the Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme has rejected the cruel dogma which decreed the perpetual inferiority of certain races. It testifies to the slowness of their evolution, but while endeavouring to correct its effects, it makes efforts to accelerate the stages of this evolution, and in the shapeless clay of aboriginal multitudes patiently moulds the face of a new humanity. I say—patiently: mark well this word. It formulates the true motto of colonial labour and expresses the virtue which we should cultivate above all others, as it is both the noblest and the most difficult to practise. Patience is the key-word in the work of colonization. For the success of its economic creations patience is the rule of a form of effort which gropes and seeks its way often and long in the unknown. Because of its human consequences, it is the condition of an efficacious result: the age-long and gloomy inheritance of barbarous times, of wretchedness and savagery which crush and overwhelm the native, has long held the rough diamond of his human soul imprisoned within a thick and hard veinstone which cannot be broken with a single blow. Slowly, gently and perseveringly we must rub and scrape this rough and wrinkled exterior, if we are to discover the precious stone which our hands must cleave, cut and polish, so that the day may come when brilliant flashes of human thought may be reflected from its dazzling facets."

II

Extracts from a speech delivered in 1924 *at Barzzaville by M. Antonetti, Governor General of French West Africa*:

"... The thing that struck me in the course of my rounds was the wretched condition of the native woman. Too often degraded

to the rôle of a beast of burden: it is upon her that falls almost everything that has to be done: apart from the felling of the forest trees necessary for the plantations, all the rest is incumbent upon the woman. The Administration, instead of tending gently to mitigate so painful a state of things, one that assuredly affects the increase of population, has in a way approved of it by imposing on women and on men alike twelve days of statute labour. This is a practice which must come to an end, and I regard it as an honour that my first step will be to abolish this servitude.

"... I have been painfully impressed by the sight of the long lines of porters who revictual the work sheds of the railway that traverses Mayombé, mounting the steeps and descending into the valleys, veritable smugglers' land, calling for considerable output of energy which is mostly useless. I regard it as impossible that such a state of things should last, and have already given orders that work be commenced to improve somewhat these tracks, but this is not sufficient. Profiting by the railroad survey, I intend to begin immediately a good track with gradients of no more than six per cent., which will admit of the work sheds being supplied at a minimum of fatigue for the porters.

Shortly widened to four metres, and then to six, it will enable us to utilize carts. Lastly we shall begin at once to make the road from Loudima to Mayombé suitable for motor traffic. Apart from a short stage that crosses the principal ridge of this chain, it is my hope that, before the end of next year, porterage for the railway will have been abolished. By this means, we shall have released thousands of men from a heavy task, and rendered available for more profitable work labourers who are unfortunately too few in these parts and of whom it is our duty to be as careful as possible.

"... Ten thousand men will have to work in the railway sheds for years to come. Drawn from distant regions and for the most part belonging to different races, they need both constant surveillance and a mitigation of their loneliness.

"We must do our best to impart an educational value to this stage of the work, so that they may return to their homes in good physical condition, having acquired the habit of regular meals and hygienic living, supplied with some money, and with tools less

rudimentary than their own, and which will be given to them when their contract is ended, more trusting through knowing us better and representing a social value superior to that of the timid natives who came to our work sheds six months previously. Before the work is at an end, there will pass through our hands hundreds of thousands of men: they will supply us with an opportunity of accomplishing a useful and humane task, one to which I intend to devote my most particular care. . . .

"The various races destined to find themselves on French soil are the indispensable auxiliaries of our colonizing efforts; in planting our flag amongst their tribes we have assumed in the face of the civilized world the imperious obligation to improve their lot.

". . . We must improve the hygienic conditions of the populace, free them as far as possible from the endemic maladies by which they are decimated, abolish above all the misery that blights their existence. We must teach them methods of agriculture less rudimentary than those now in use, . . . methods which surprised me because they are so inferior to those in vogue amongst the least advanced races of other colonies. We ought to give them some conception of the life of human society, arouse in them that desire for improvement which constitutes the great lever in efforts towards civilization. They must be snatched from the barbarism in which they are still plunged; but for the accomplishment of this task a collective effort is necessary along with the reconstruction of the villages in which mutual aid, emulation and community of needs as well as an apprenticeship in discipline form the best guarantees of a necessary development which our advice, our instruction and the firmness of our control may help to accelerate, especially if we interest therein the pick of the native community by inviting them to collaborate with us in fields of action where their help may prove invaluable, more particularly in the beneficent dispensation of justice.

"In all our colonies we have aimed at constructing a judicial system fitted to the mentality and the customs of the natives destined to benefit thereby.

"It is in this spirit that, wherever possible, we have accorded to the chiefs and the principal men of the various tribes an active and

frequently important share in our deliberations, and even in legal decisions, whereas in equatorial Africa our backward populations seemed at the outset scarcely capable of doing more than offer a few timid words of advice.

"Nevertheless, one of the first principles of our colonial doctrine imposes upon us due respect for native customs, and the application of this principle is a delicate matter. Custom, indeed, is not a written and immutable law; it is the ever changing reflection of the thoughts and ideas of a society built up on the traditions and beliefs of bygone generations.

"To carry out this work, of such vast scope and importance, we have everywhere else except here appealed to the collaboration of the best of our natives. Too backward to be able to benefit by this confidence, the Blacks of the Congo have been excluded therefrom. They now appear to me to have reached the stage at which we can associate them with our work by according them a larger share in the administration of justice, by inviting them to deliberate with us in the settlement of lawsuits which divide their own kindred. Administrative regulations have this in common with native customs, that they ought constantly to be adapted to the populations which they rule, and a reform of native justice will enable us both to render our educational influence more effective and sure because it is more wisely carried out, and to restore to carefully chosen natives that degree of authority which hitherto we had kept in our own hands for the very reason that it had been impossible to find, in tribes that were too primitive, individuals capable of assuming the necessary responsibility. . . ."—*Afrique Française*, January 1925.

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